

De Balzac

H. DE BALZAC

COMÉDIE HUMAINE

Edited by

GEORGE SAINTSBURY



Tower in which Balzac passed most of his time at College.

H. DE BALZAC

SERAPHITA

Translated by

CLARA BELL

with a Preface by

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

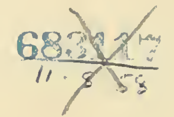


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PREFACE

The contents of the present volume stand alone in the *Comédie Humaine*, or nearly alone; but they are very closely connected with each other. And to those who care to trace the connection of an author's nature and his work, without which tracing—useless as it may be in some cases, and superfluous in most—it will never be possible for any one to appreciate Balzac to the full, they have an interest not inferior to that of any other portion. In one of them, moreover, *Séraphita*, we shall find Balzac's most successful and brilliant essays of style as style—essays so different from his general practice, that they have raised some curious speculations. It is known that, in the early thirties, Balzac and Gautier were a good deal together, and even worked in some sort of collaboration. In one of his books, *Béatrix*, Balzac has printed a passage which, as it happens, is known to be Gautier's, and there is a good deal in *Séraphita* which may be suspected of a similar origin.

To those who care for the story, or who are attracted to the *Comédie* as a varied storehouse of observation of ordinary life, this volume must seem, and, I believe, almost invariably does seem, rather dreary and repellent stuff. To others, it yields in interest to no volume of

the *Comédie*, though the interest may be of a peculiar and special kind. As most people who know anything at all about Balzac are aware, Louis Lambert is Balzac himself; the *Traité de la Volonté* was actually written, and destroyed by an irate schoolmaster; and most of the incidents brought in have more or less foundation in fact. The same, of course, cannot be said of *Les Proscrits* and *Séraphita*. But the former, while belonging in kind generally to the *Études Philosophiques*, connects itself on another side with the *Contes Drolatiques*, and with Balzac's not rare studies of the Middle Ages. About these he seems always to have had a hankering to write, which was due partly to his lifelong cult of Sir Walter, and partly to a curious delusion that he was himself a born historical novelist. *Séraphita*, on the other hand, has a sort of kinship with other products of the 1830 period.

But all the books are perhaps most interesting to us, first, as showing Balzac's specially 'philosophic' velleities; and secondly, as exhibiting a side of him which is apt to be overlooked—his character as a reader and a student.

The 'philosophy' has been rather variously judged. It has seldom been taken very seriously; but attempts have sometimes been made to discover in it anticipations of later discoveries or, to adopt a much safer word, theories. These anticipation-hunts rarely send the hunter home with an empty bag, but it is as rarely that the game is of certain quality. Indeed, if we remember that even in the widest and vaguest sense, 'philosophy' was practically exhausted many hundred years ago—that new philosophies are only the old ones with their

coats and trousers turned, scoured, dyed, and altered somewhat in fashion—it would be very odd if a clever man, even with no regular training or special vocation, did not anticipate more or less what others of his contemporaries are going to think. For the rest, Balzac's philosophy is of a distinctly loose sort, and may very well have occurred to him in whole or in part when he was a studious, if irregularly studious, schoolboy. It is, indeed, very much of the kind to which schoolboys of some brains are as prone as men of riper years, and in which they are perhaps as likely to attain a result, or what looks like it.

The second bearing of these curious books is more tangible. It is certain that Balzac, unlike Dickens, his fellow *voyant*, and still more unlike most of the 'realists' who claim kindred with him, was a very great reader. In his period of production, despite the enormous expense of time which his methods of writing imposed on him, he seems to have read a great deal; in his boyhood and in the ten years of his apprenticeship he seems to have read enormously. He certainly never attained to exact scientific or scholarly knowledge of any subject by means of books. He did not know literature or history, much less philosophy, as he knew legal procedure and the theory of speculation, the signboards of Paris, and not a little of what went on inside Parisian waistcoats and under Parisian hats. But he had a vast amount of 'fine confused' reading, as the Swedenborgian learning of *Séraphita*, no less than the not altogether alien lore of *Sur Cathérine de Medicis*, shows. He was even, as not a few passages in his reviews, in his other miscellaneous writings, and in his letters show, rather

inclined to overvalue and plume himself upon this reading. Nor was it without effect, both good and bad, on his work. On the one hand, it added to that slightly undigested character which, with rare exceptions, is characteristic of him; on the other, it largely helped the appearance of variety, fulness, encyclopædic knowledge, and interest which is the complement and atonement of this undigestedness. Balzac was really a 'full' man in reading as well as thought; and of this reading fulness, the batch of books before us is perhaps the most striking example.

Louis Lambert appeared first (as *Notice Biographique sur L. L.*) in 1832, in the *Nouveaux Contes Philosophiques*; then in February 1833 as a small volume by itself, a good deal enlarged, and entitled *Histoire intellectuelle de L. L.*; then, with its actual dimensions, in a collection entitled *Le Livre Mystique*, published by Werdet in 1835. In 1842, with *Séraphita*, but apparently (I have not seen the book) not with *Les Proscrits*, it was again published by Charpentier; and in 1846 it joined the *Comédie*. *Les Proscrits* first appeared in the *Revue de Paris* for May 1831, and was almost immediately included in the *Romans et Contes Philosophiques*. Its fortunes, after it was joined to its companions, have been told, as have those of *Séraphita*. This last appeared first in the *Revue de Paris* for June and July 1834. In 1840 it became an *Étude Philosophique* with *Les Proscrits*, *Gambara*, and *Massimilla Doni*.

G. S.

SERAPHITA

To Madame Eveline de Hanska,
née Countess Rzewuska.

Madam,—Here is the work you desired of me; in dedicating it to you I am happy to offer you some token of the respectful affection you allow me to feel for you. If I should be accused of incapacity after trying to extract from the depths of mysticism this book, which demanded the glowing poetry of the East under the transparency of our beautiful language; the blame be yours! Did you not compel me to the effort—such an effort as Jacob's—by telling me that even the most imperfect outline of the figure dreamed of by you, as it has been by me from my infancy, would still be something in your eyes? Here, then, is that something.—Why cannot this book be set apart exclusively for those lofty spirits who, like you, are preserved from worldly pettiness by solitude! They might impress on it the melodious rhythm which it lacks, and which, in the hands of one of our poets, might have made it the glorious epic for which France still waits. Still, they will accept it from me as one of those balustrades, carved by some artist full of faith, on which the pilgrim leans to meditate on the end of man, while gazing at the choir of a fine church.

I remain, Madam, with respect, your faithful servant, *De Balzac.*

PARIS, *August* 23, 1835.

I

SERAPHITUS

On seeing the Norwegian coast as outlined on the map, what imagination can fail to be amazed at its fantastic contour—long tongues of granite, round which the surges of the North Sea are for ever moaning? Who has not dreamed of the majestic spectacle of these beachless shores, these endless creeks, and inlets, and little bays, no two of which are alike, and each a pathless gulf? Would it not seem as though Nature had amused herself by representing, in an indestructible hieroglyphic, the symbol of life in Norway, by giving its coast the configuration of the bones of an enormous fish? For fishing is the staple of commerce, and almost the sole article of food to a handful of men who cling, like a tuft of lichen, to those barren rocks. On a land extending over fourteen degrees of longitude there are scarcely seven hundred thousand souls. Owing to the inglorious dangers and the perpetual snow that these Norwegian peaks offer to the traveller—the very name of Norway makes one cold—their sublime beauty remains inviolate and harmonises with certain human phenomena, which took place there—equally unknown, at least to romance, and of which this is the story.

When one of these inlets, a mere fissure in the sight of the eider-ducks, is wide enough to prevent the sea from freezing over in the rocky prison it tosses and struggles in, the inhabitants call such a little gulf a fjord, a word which most geographers have tried to adopt into their respective languages. In spite of the general resemblance of all these channels, each has its own individuality; the sea penetrates into all these breaches,

but in each the rocks are differently riven, and their contorted precipices defy the terms of geometry : here the crest is toothed like a saw ; there its sides are too perpendicular to allow the snow to rest on them, or the glorious clumps of northern pines to take root ; further on, the convulsions of the globe have rounded off some soft declivity, a lovely valley furnished with stage on stage of dark-plumed trees. You feel inclined to call this land Marine Switzerland.

One of these gulfs, lying between Dronthjem and Christiania, is called Stromfiord. If the Stromfiord is not the most beautiful of these scenes, it has at least the merit of presenting the earthly magnificence of Norway, and of having been the background to the scenes of a really heavenly romance.

The general outline of the Stromfiord is, at a first glance, that of a funnel forced open by the sea. The entrance made by the waves is the record of a contest between the ocean and the granite, two equally powerful elements—one by its inertia, the other by its motion. The proof lies in some half-sunken rocks of fantastic shapes which prohibit the entrance of vessels. The hardy sons of the soil can in some places leap from rock to rock, undismayed by a gulf a hundred fathoms deep and six feet wide. Here and there a frail and ill-balanced block of gneiss, thrown across, joins two crags, or hunters or fishermen have flung some pine-trees, by way of a bridge, from one perpendicular cliff to another, where the sea murmurs unceasingly below.

This dangerous inlet turns to the right with a serpentine twist, where it meets a mountain rising three hundred fathoms above the surface of the sea, its foot forming a vertical shelf half a league in length, where the unyielding granite does not begin to split into rifts and inequalities till at about two hundred feet above the water. Thus the sea, rushing violently in, is no less violently driven back, by the resistant inertia of the

mountain, towards the opposite shore, which the rebounding waves have worn into gentle indentations. The fiord is closed at the head by a cliff of gneiss, crowned with forest, whence a stream falls in cascades, forms a river when the snows melt, spreads into a lake of considerable extent, and escapes with a rush, carrying down old pine-trees and ancient larches, hardly perceptible in the tumbling torrent. Flung by the fall to the bottom of the abyss, these trees presently come to the surface again, and combine in a tangle, forming islets which are stranded on the left bank, where the inhabitants of the little village built on the Stromfiord find them splintered, broken, sometimes entire, but always stripped of their leaves and branches.

The mountain, which thus receives at its feet the assaults of the sea, and on its head the buffeting of the north wind, is the Falberg. Its summit, always wrapped in a mantle of ice and snow, is the highest in Norway, where the vicinity of the Pole produces, at a level of eighteen hundred feet above the sea, such cold as prevails elsewhere on the highest mountains on the globe. The crest of this cliff, perpendicular on the side towards the sea, shelves gradually away to the east down to the falls of the Sieg, by a succession of slopes where the cold allows no vegetation but heath and much-enduring shrubs. That part of the fiord where the waters escape under the thick forests is called Siegdalen, or the valley of the Sieg—the name of the river.

The bay opposite to the cliffs of the Falberg is the valley of Jarvis—a pretty spot overlooked by hills covered with fir-trees, larches, and birch, with a few oaks and beeches, the thickest and most variously coloured hangings Nature ever affords to this wild northern scenery. The eye can easily distinguish the line where the ground, warmed by the sun's rays, first admits of culture and shows the first signs of the Norwegian flora. At this part the gulf is wide enough to allow the

waters flung back by the Falberg to die murmuring on the lowest ledge of the hills, where the strand is softly fringed with fine sand, mingled with mica, tiny crystals, and pretty pebbles of porphyry and many-coloured marbles brought from Sweden by the river, with waifs from the sea, and shells and ocean weeds tossed up by storms from the Pole or from the South.

At the foot of the Jarvis hills is the village, consisting of about two hundred wooden houses, inhabited by a population that live there, lost, like the swarms of bees in a forest, happily vegetating and extorting a living from the wilderness around them. The unrecognised existence of this village is easily explained. Few of its men were bold enough to venture out among the rocks to reach the open sea and attempt the fishing which the Norwegians carry on to a great extent on less dangerous parts of the coast. The various fish in the fiord partly supplies the food of the inhabitants; the pasture land in the valleys affords milk and butter; a few plots of good land allow them to reap a harvest of rye, of hemp, and vegetables, which they manage to protect against the bitter cold and the transient but terrible heat of the sun, showing true Norwegian ingenuity in this twofold conflict. The absence of communications, either by land, where roads are impracticable, or by sea, where only small boats can thread the watery labyrinths of the fiord, hinders them from acquiring wealth by the sale of their timber. It would cost an equally enormous sum to clear the channel at the entrance or to open up a road to the interior.

The roads from Christiania to Dronthjem all make a bend round the Stromfiord, crossing the Sieg by a bridge several leagues above the falls; the coast between the Jarvis valley and Dronthjem is covered with impenetrable forests, and the Falberg is divided from Christiania by inaccessible precipices. The village of Jarvis might perhaps have opened communications with Sweden by

way of the Sieg, but to bring it into touch with civilisation the Stromfiord needed a man of genius. The genius indeed came: a poet, a pious Swede, who died admiring and respecting the beauties of the land as being one of the grandest of the Creator's works.

Those of my readers who have been gifted by study with that 'mind's eye,' whose rapid perception can throw on the soul, as on a canvas, the most diverse landscapes of the world, may now readily conceive of the general aspect of the Stromfiord. They alone, perhaps, will be able to thread their tortuous way through the reef of the inlet where the sea fights and foams; to glide on its swell below the shelves of the Falberg, whose white peaks mingle with the misty clouds of a sky that is almost constantly pearl-grey; to admire the dented margin of the pretty sheet of water; to hear the falls of the Sieg, which drops in long streamers on to a picturesque medley of large trees tossed in confusion, some upright, some hidden among boulders of gneiss; and at last to rest on the smiling pictures offered to the eye by the lower hills of Jarvis, whence rise the noblest products of the north in clumps, in myriads: here, birch-trees, as graceful as girls and, like them, gently stooping; there, pillared aisles of beech with centennial, mossy trunks; all the contrast of these various shades of green, of white clouds among black pine-trees, of heath-grown commons in every shade of purple—all the colours, all the fragrance, the unknown marvels, in short, of this vegetation.

Expand the proportions of this amphitheatre, soar up to the clouds, lose yourself in the caves of the rocks where the walruses hide, still your fancy will never be equal to the riches, the poetry of this Norwegian scene. For can your thought ever be as vast as the ocean that bounds the land, as fantastic as the strange forms assumed by the forests, as the clouds, the shadows, the changes of light?

Do you see now, above the meadows on the shore, on

the furthest fold of the plain that undulates at the foot of the high hills of Jarvis, two or three hundred houses, roofed with *næver*, a kind of thatch of birch bark; frail-looking dwellings, quite low, and suggesting silkworms flung there on a mulberry leaf brought by the wind? Above these humble and peaceful dwellings is a church, built with a simplicity that harmonises with the poverty of the village. A graveyard lies round the chancel of this church; the parsonage is seen beyond. A little higher, on a knoll of the hillside, stands a dwelling, the only one built of stone, and for that reason called by the natives the Castle—the Swedish Castle.

In fact, a rich man had come from Sweden thirty years before this story opens and settled at Jarvis, trying to improve its fortunes. This little mansion, erected with a view to tempting the inhabitants to build the like, was remarkable for its substantial character, for a garden wall—a rare thing in Norway, where, in spite of the abundance of stone, wood is used for all the fences, even for those that divide the fields. The house, thus protected from snow, stood on a mound in the midst of a vast courtyard. The windows were screened by those verandahs of immense depth supported on large squared fir-trunks, which give Northern buildings a sort of patriarchal expression.

From under their shelter the savage bareness of the Falberg could easily be seen, and the infinitude of the open ocean be compared with the drop of water in the foam-flecked gulf; the portentous rush of the Sieg could be heard, though from afar the sheet of water looked motionless, where it threw itself into its granite bowl hedged in for three leagues round with vast glaciers—in short, the whole landscape where the scene is laid of the supernatural but simple events of this narrative.

The winter of 1799-1800 was one of the hardest in the memory of Europe; the Norway sea froze in every

fiord, where the violence of the undertow commonly prevents the ice from forming. A wind, in its effects resembling the Spanish desert wind, had swept the ice of the Stromfiord by drifting the snow to the head of the gulf. It was long since the good folks of Jarvis had seen the vast mirror of the pool in winter reflecting the sky—a curious effect here in the heart of the hills whose curves were effaced under successive layers of snow, the sharpest peaks, like the deepest hollows, forming mere faint undulations under the immense sheet thrown by nature over the landscape now so dolefully dazzling and monotonous. The long hangings of the Sieg, suddenly frozen, described a vast arch, behind which the traveller might have walked sheltered from the storm if any one had been bold enough to venture across country. But the dangers of any expedition kept the boldest hunters within doors, fearing that they might fail to discern under the snow the narrow paths traced along the edge of the precipices, the ravines, and the cliffs. Not a creature gave life to this white desert reigned over by the Polar blast, whose voice alone was sometimes though rarely heard.

The sky, always grey, gave the pool a hue of tarnished steel. Now and again an eider-duck might fly across with impunity, thanks to the thick down that shelters the dreams of the wealthy, who little know the dangers that purchase it ; but the bird—like the solitary Bedouin who traverses the sands of Africa—was neither seen nor heard ; in the torpid air, bereft of electric resonance, the rush of its wings was noiseless, its joyous cry unheard. What living eye could endure the sparkle of that precipice hung with glittering icicles, and the hard reflections from the snows, scarcely tinted on the peaks by the beams of the pallid sun which peeped out now and then like a dying thing anxious to prove that it still lives ? Many a time, when the rack of grey clouds, driven in squadrons over the mountains and pine forests, hid the

sky with their dense shroud, the earth, for lack of heavenly lights, had an illumination of its own.

Here, then, were met all the majestic attributes of the eternal cold that reigns at the Pole, of which the most striking is such royal silence as absolute monarchs dwell in. Every condition carried to excess has the appearance of negation, or the stamp of apparent death; is not life the conflict of two forces? Here nothing showed a sign of life. One force alone, the barren force of frost, reigned supreme. The beating of the open sea even did not penetrate to this silent hollow, so full of sound during the three brief months when nature hurriedly produces the uncertain harvest needful to support this patient race. A few tall fir-trees protruded their dark pyramids loaded with festoons of snow; and the droop of their boughs, bending under these heavy beards, gave a finishing touch to the mourning aspect of the heights, where they were seen as black points.

Every family clung to the fireside in a house carefully closed, with a store of biscuit, run butter, dried fish, and provisions laid in to stand seven months of winter. Even the smoke of these dwellings was scarcely visible; they were all nearly buried in snow, of which the weight was broken by long planks starting from the roof, and supported at some distance from the walls on strong posts, thus forming a covered way round the house. During these dreadful winters the women weave and dye the stuffs of wool or linen of which the clothes are made; while the men for the most part read, or else lose themselves in those prodigious meditations which have given birth to the grand theories, the mystical dreams of the North, its beliefs and its studies—so thorough on certain points of science that they have probed to the core; a semi-monastic mode of life, which forces the soul back on itself, to feed on itself, and which makes the Norwegian peasant a being apart in the nations of Europe.

This, then, was the state of things on the Stromfiord

in the first year of the nineteenth century, about the middle of the month of May.

One morning, when the sun was blazing down into the heart of this landscape, lighting up the flashes of the ephemeral diamonds produced by the crystallised surface of the snow and ice, two persons crossed the gulf and flew along the shelves of the Falberg, mounting towards the summit from ledge to ledge. Were they two human beings, or were they arrows? Any one who should have seen them would have taken them for two eiders soaring with one consent below the clouds. Not the most superstitious fisherman, not the most daring hunter, would have supposed that human creatures could have the power of pursuing a path along the faint lines traced on the granite sides, where this pair were, nevertheless, gliding along with the appalling skill of somnambulists, when, utterly unconscious of the laws of gravity and the perils of the least false step, they run along a roof, preserving their balance under the influence of an unknown power.

'Stop here, Seraphitus,' said a pale girl, 'and let me take breath. I would look only at you as we climbed the walls of this abyss; if I had not, what would have become of me? But, at the same time, I am but a feeble creature. Do I tire you?'

'No,' said the being on whose arm she leaned. 'Let us go on, Minna; the spot where we are standing is not firm enough to remain on.'

Once more the snow hissed off from the long boards attached to their feet, and they presently reached the first angular crag which chance had thrown out boldly from the face of the precipice. The person whom Minna had addressed as Seraphitus poised himself on his right heel to raise the lath of about six feet long, and as narrow as a child's shoe, which was fastened to his boot by two straps of walrus skin; this lath, about an inch thick, had a sole of reindeer skin, and the hair, pressed back against the snow, brought him to a full stop. By

turning his left foot, on which this snow-shoe (or *ski*) was not less than twelve feet in length, he was able to turn nimbly round, he returned to his timid companion, lifted her up in spite of his awkward foot gear, and set her down on a rocky seat, after dusting away the snow with his pelisse.

'You are safe here, Minna, and may tremble at your ease.'

'We have already reached a third of the height of the Ice-cap,' said she, looking at the peak, which she called by its popular Norwegian name. 'I do not yet believe——'

But she was too much out of breath to talk; she smiled at Seraphitus, who, without replying, held her up, his hand on her heart, listening to its palpitations, as rapid as those of a startled fledgling.

'It often beats as fast as that when I have been running,' said she.

Seraphitus bowed, without any contempt or coldness. In spite of the grace of this reply, which made it almost sweet, it nevertheless betrayed a reserve which in a woman would have been intoxicatingly provoking. Seraphitus clasped the girl to him, and Minna took the caress for an answer, and sat looking at him. As Seraphitus raised his head, tossing back the golden locks of his hair with an almost impatient jerk, he saw happiness in his companion's eyes.

'Yes, Minna,' said he, in a paternal tone that was peculiarly charming in a youth scarcely full grown, 'look at me. Do not look down.'

'Why?'

'Do you want to know?—Try then.'

Minna gave one hasty glance at her feet, and cried out like a child that has met a tiger. The dreadful influence of the void had seized her, and one look had been enough to give it to her. The fiord, greedy of its prey, had a loud voice, stunning her by ringing in her

ears, as though to swallow her up more surely by coming between her and life. From her hair to her feet, all down her back, ran a shudder, at first of cold; but then it seemed to fire her nerves with intolerable heat, throbbed in her veins, and made her limbs feel weak from electrical shocks, like those caused by touching the electrical eel. Too weak to resist, she felt herself drawn by some unknown force to the bottom of the cliff, where she fancied she could see a monster spouting venom, a monster whose magnetic eyes fascinated her, and whose yawning jaws crunched his prey by anticipation.

'I am dying, my Seraphitus, having loved no one but you,' said she, mechanically moving to throw herself down.

Seraphitus blew softly on her brow and eyes. Suddenly, as a traveller is refreshed by a bath, Minna had forgotten that acute anguish; it had vanished under that soothing breath, which penetrated her frame and bathed it in balsamic effluence, as swiftly as the breath had passed through the air.

'Who and what are you?' said she, with an impulse of delicious alarm. 'But I know.—You are my life.—How can you look down into the gulf without dying?' she asked after a pause.

Seraphitus left Minna clinging to the granite, and went as a shadow might have done to stand on the edge of the crag, his eyes sounding the bottom of the fiord, defying its bewildering depths; his figure did not sway, his brow was as white and calm as that of a marble statue—deep meeting deep.

'Seraphitus, if you love me, come back!' cried the girl. 'Your danger brings back all my torments. Who—who are you to have such superhuman strength at your age?' she asked, feeling his arms around her once more.

'Why,' said Seraphitus, 'you can look into far vaster

space without a qualm'; and raising his hand, the strange being pointed to the blue halo formed by the clouds round a clear opening just over their heads, in which they could see the stars, though it was daylight, in consequence of some atmospheric laws not yet fully explained.

'But what a difference!' she said, smiling.

'You are right,' he replied; 'we are born to aspire skywards. Our native home, like a mother's face, never frightens its children.'

His voice found an echo in his companion's soul; she was silent.

'Come, let us go on,' said he.

They rushed on together by the paths faintly visible along the mountain side, devouring the distance, flying from shelf to shelf, from ledge to ledge, with the swiftness of the Arab horse, that bird of the desert. In a few minutes they reached a green carpet of grass, moss, and flowers, on which no one yet had ever rested.

'What a pretty *sæter*!' cried Minna, giving the native name to this little meadow; 'but how comes it here, so high up?'

'Here, indeed, the Norwegian vegetation ceases,' said Seraphitus; 'and if a few plants and flowers thrive on this spot, it is thanks to the shelter of the rock which protects them from the Polar cold.—Put this spray in your bosom, Minna,' he went on, plucking a flower; 'take this sweet creature on which no human eye has yet rested, and keep the unique blossom in memory of this day, unique in your life! You will never again find a guide to lead you to this *sæter*.'

He hastily gave her a hybrid plant which his eagle eye had discerned among the growth of *silene acaulis* and saxifrage, a real miracle developed under the breath of angels. Minna seized it with childlike eagerness; a tuft of green, as transparent and vivid as an emerald, composed of tiny leaves curled into cones, light brown at the heart, shaded softly to green at the point, and cut

into infinitely delicate teeth. These leaves were so closely set that they seemed to mingle in a dense mass of dainty rosettes. Here and there this cushion was studded with white stars edged with a line of gold, and from the heart of each grew a bunch of purple stamens without a pistil. A scent that seemed to combine that of the rose and of the orange-blossom, but wilder and more ethereal, gave a heavenly charm to this mysterious flower, at which Seraphitus gazed with melancholy, as though its perfume had expressed to him a plaintive thought, which he alone understood. To Minna this amazing blossom seemed a caprice of Nature, who had amused herself by endowing a handful of gems with the freshness, tenderness, and fragrance of a plant.

'Why should it be unique? Will it never reproduce its kind?' said she to Seraphitus, who coloured and changed the subject.

'Let us sit down—turn round—look! At such a height you will perhaps not be frightened. The gulfs are so far below that you cannot measure their depth; they have the level perspective of the sea, the indefiniteness of the clouds, the hue of the sky. The ice in the fiord is an exquisite turquoise, the pine forests are visible only as dim brown streaks. To us the depths may well be thus disguised.'

Seraphitus spoke these words with that unction of tone and gesture which is known only to those who have attained to the highest places on the mountains of the earth, and which is so involuntarily assumed that the most arrogant master finds himself prompted to treat his guide as a brother, and never feels himself the superior till they have descended into the valleys where men dwell.

He untied Minna's snow-shoes, kneeling at her feet. The girl did not notice it, so much was she amazed at the imposing spectacle of the Norwegian panorama—the long stretch of rocks lying before her at a glance, so much was she struck by the perennial solemnity of those

frozen summits, for which words have no expression.

'We have not come here by unaided human strength!' said she, clasping her hands. 'I must be dreaming!'

'You call a fact supernatural, because you do not know its cause,' he replied.

'Your answers are always stamped with some deep meaning,' said she. 'With you I understand everything without an effort.—Ah! I am free!'

'Your snow-shoes are off, that is all.'

'Oh!' cried she, 'and I would fain have untied yours, and have kissed your feet!'

'Keep those speeches for Wilfrid,' said Seraphitus mildly.

'Wilfrid!' echoed Minna in a tone of fury, which died away as she looked at her companion. 'You are never angry!' said she, trying, but in vain, to take his hand. 'You are in all things so desperately perfect!'

'Whence you infer that I have no feelings?'

Minna was startled at a glance so penetratingly thrown into her mind.

'You prove to me that we understand each other,' replied she, with the grace of a loving woman.

Seraphitus gently shook his head, with a flashing look that was at once sweet and sad.

'You who know everything,' Minna went on, 'tell me why the alarm I felt below, by your side, is dissipated now that I am up here; why I dare for the first time to look you in the face; whereas, down there, I scarce dare steal a glance at you?'

'Perhaps up here we have cast off the mean things of the earth,' said he, pulling off his pelisse.

'I never saw you so beautiful,' said Minna, sitting down on a mossy stone, and gazing in contemplation of the being who had thus brought her to a part of the mountain which from afar seemed inaccessible.

Never, in fact, had Seraphitus shone with such brilliant

splendour—the only expression that can do justice to the eagerness of his face and the aspect of his person. Was this radiance due to the effulgence given to the complexion by the pure mountain air and the reflection from the snow? Was it the result of an internal impetus which still excites the frame at the moment it is resting after long exertion? Was it produced by the sudden contrast between the golden glow of sunshine and the gloom of the clouds through which this pretty pair had passed?

To all these causes we must perhaps add the effects of one of the most beautiful phenomena that human nature can offer. If some skilled physiologist had studied this being, who, to judge by the boldness of his brow and the light in his eyes at this moment, was a youth of seventeen; if he had sought the springs of this blooming life under the whitest skin that the North ever bestowed on one of its sons, he would, no doubt, have believed in the existence of a phosphoric fluid in the sinews that seemed to shine through the skin, or in the constant presence of an internal glow, which tinted Seraphitus as a light shines through an alabaster vase. Delicately slender as his hands were—he had taken off his gloves to loosen Minna's sandals—they seemed to have such strength as the Creator has given to the diaphanous joints of a crab. The fire that blazed in his eyes rivalled the rays of the sun; he seemed not to receive but to give out light. His frame, as slight and fragile as a woman's, was that of a nature feeble in appearance, but whose strength is always adequate to its desires, which are sometimes strong. Seraphitus, though of middle height, seemed taller as seen in front; he looked as if he fain would spring upwards. His hair, with its light curls, as if touched by a fairy hand and tossed by a breeze, added to the illusion produced by his airy attitude; but this absolutely effortless mien was the outcome rather of a mental state than of physical habit.

Minna's imagination seconded this constant hallucina-

tion ; it would have affected any beholder, for it gave to Seraphitus the appearance of one of the beings we see in our happiest dreams. No familiar type can give any idea of this face, to Minna so majestically manly, though in the sight of a man its feminine grace would have eclipsed the loveliest heads by Raphael. That Painter of Heaven has frequently given a sort of tranquil joy and tender suavity to the lines of his angelic beauties; but without seeing Seraphitus himself, what mind can conceive of the sadness mingled with hope which half clouded the ineffable feelings expressed in his features? Who could picture to himself, even in the artist's dream, where all things are possible, the shadows cast by mysterious awe on that too intellectual brow, which seemed to interrogate the skies, and always to pity the earth? That head could tower disdainful, like a noble bird of prey whose cries rend the air, or bow resigned, like the turtle-dove whose voice sheds tenderness in the depths of the silent forest.

Seraphitus had a complexion of surprising whiteness, made all the more remarkable by red lips, brown eyebrows, and silky lashes, the only details that broke the pallor of a face whose perfect regularity did not hinder the strong expression of his feelings; they were mirrored there without shock or violence, but with the natural, majestic gravity we like to attribute to superior beings. Everything in those monumental features spoke of strength and repose.

Minna stood up to take the young man's hand, hoping to draw him down to her so as to press on that fascinating brow a kiss of admiration rather than of love; but one look from his eyes, a look that went through her as a sunbeam goes through a glass prism, froze the poor child. She felt the gulf between them without understanding it; she turned away her head and wept. Suddenly a strong hand was round her waist, and a voice full of kindness said—

'Come.'

She obeyed, resting her head in sudden relief on the young man's heart; while he, measuring his steps by hers in gentle and attentive conformity, led her to a spot whence they could behold the dazzling beauty of the Polar scenery.

'But before I look or listen, tell me, Seraphitus, why do you repulse me? Have I displeased you? And how? Tell me. I do not want to call anything my own; I would that my earthly possessions should be yours, as the riches of my heart already are; that light should come to me only from your eyes, as my mind is dependent on yours; then I should have no fear of offending you, since I should but reflect the impulses of your soul, the words of your heart, the light of your light, as we send up to God the meditations by which He feeds our spirit.—I would be wholly you!'

'Well, Minna, a constant aspiration is a promise made by the future. Hope on!—Still, if you would be pure always, unite the thought of the Almighty to your earthly affections. Thus will you love all creatures, and your heart will soar high!'

'I will do whatever you desire,' said she, looking up at him timidly.

'I cannot be your companion,' said Seraphitus sadly.

He suppressed some reflections, raised his arms in the direction of Christiania, which was visible as a speck on the horizon, and said—

'Look!'

'We are indeed small,' said she.

'Yes; but we become great by feeling and intellect,' said Seraphitus. 'The knowledge of things, Minna, begins with us; the little we know of the laws of the visible world enables us to conceive of the immensity of higher spheres. I know not whether the time is ripe for talking thus to you; but I so long to communicate to

you the flame of my hopes! Some day, perhaps, we may meet in the world where love never dies.'

'Why not now and for ever?' said she in a murmur.

'Here nothing is permanent!' said he in a tone of scorn. 'The transient joys of earthly love are false lights which reveal to some souls the dawn of more durable bliss, just as the discovery of a law of nature enables certain privileged minds to deduct a whole system. Is not our perishable happiness here below an earnest of some other more perfect happiness, as the earth, a mere fragment of the universe, testifies to the universe? We cannot measure the orbit of the Divine mind, of which we are but atoms as minute as God is great; but we may have our intuitions of its vastness, we may kneel, adore, and wait. Men are constantly mistaken in their science, not seeing that everything on their globe is relative and subordinate to a general cycle, an incessant productiveness which inevitably involves progress, and an aim. Man himself is not the final creation; if he were, God would not exist.'

'How have you had time to learn so many things?' said the girl.

'They are memories,' replied he.

'To me you are more beautiful than anything I see.'

'We are one of the greatest works of God. Has He not bestowed on us the faculty of reflecting nature, concentrating it in ourselves by thought, and making it a stepping-stone from which to fly to Him? We love each other in proportion to what is heavenly in our souls.—But do not be unjust, Minna; look at the scene displayed at our feet; is it not grand? The ocean lies spread like a floor, the mountains are like the walls of an amphitheatre, the ether above is like the suspended velarium of the theatre, and we can inhale the mind of God as a perfume.

'Look! the storms that wreck vessels filled with men from hence appear like mere froth; if you look above you

all is serene; we see a diadem of stars. The shades of earthly expression are here lost. Thus supported by nature so attenuated by space, do you not feel your mind to be deep rather than keen? Are you not conscious of more loftiness than enthusiasm, of more energy than will? Have you not feelings to which nothing within us can give utterance? Do you not feel your wings?—Let us pray!'

Seraphitus knelt, crossing his hands over his bosom, and Minna fell on her knees weeping. Thus they remained for some minutes, and for some minutes the blue halo that quivered in the sky above them spread, and rays of light fell round the unconscious pair.

'Why do you not weep when I cannot help it?' said Minna in a broken voice.

'Those who are pure in spirit shed no tears,' replied Seraphitus, rising. 'Why should I weep? I no longer see human misery. Here all is good and shines in majesty. Below I hear the supplications and the lament of the harp of suffering, sounding under the hands of the spirit held captive. Here I listen to the concert of harmonious harps. Below, you have hope, the beautiful rudiment of faith; but here faith reigns, the realisation of hope!'

'You can never love me, I am too imperfect; you disdain me,' said the girl.

'Minna, the violet hidden at the foot of the oak says to itself, "The sun does not love me, he never comes."—The sun says, "If I fell on her, that poor little flower would perish!" Because he is the flower's friend he lets his beams steal through the oak-leaves, subduing them to tint the petals of the blossom he loves.—I feel I am not sufficiently shrouded, and fear lest you should see me too clearly; you would quail if you knew me too well. Listen; I have no taste for the fruits of the earth; I have understood your joys too well; like the debauched Emperors of Pagan Rome, I am disgusted with all things,

for I have the gift of vision.—Leave me for ever,' added Seraphitus sorrowfully.

He went away to sit down on a projecting rock, his head drooping on his breast.

'Why thus drive me to despair?' said Minna.

'Go from me!' cried Seraphitus; 'I can give nothing that you want. Your love is too gross for me. Why do you not love Wilfrid? Wilfrid is a man, a man tested by passion, who will clasp you in his sinewy arms, and make you feel his broad, strong hand. He has fine black hair, eyes full of human feeling, a heart that fires the words of his lips with a lava torrent. He will crush you with caresses. He will be your lover, your husband. Go to Wilfrid!'

Minna was crying bitterly.

'Dare you tell me that you do not love him?' he added in a voice that pierced her like a dagger.

'Mercy! Mercy! My Seraphitus!'

'Love him, poor child of earth, to which fate irrevocably rivets you,' said the terrible Seraphitus, seizing the girl with such force as dragged her to the brink of the *sæter*, whence the prospect was so extensive that a young creature full of enthusiasm might easily fancy that she was above the world. 'I wanted a companion to go with me to the realm of light; I thought to show her this ball of clay, and I find you still cling to it. Adieu! Remain as you are, enjoy through your senses, obey your nature; turn pale with pale men, blush with women, play with children, pray with sinners, look up to heaven when you are stricken; tremble, hope, yearn; you will have a comrade, you still may laugh and weep, give and receive.—For me—I am an exile far from heaven; like a monster, far from earth! My heart beats for none; I live in myself, for myself alone. I feel through my spirit, I breathe by my brain, I see by my mind, I am dying of impatience and longing. No one here below can satisfy my wishes or soothe my

eagerness; and I have forgotten how to weep. I am alone.—I am resigned, and can wait.'

Seraphitus looked at the flowery knoll on which he had placed Minna, and then turned towards the frowning summits, round whose peaks heavy clouds had gathered, into which he seemed to fling his next thoughts.

'Do you hear that delightful music, Minna,' said he, in his dove-like tones, for the eagle had ended his cry. 'Might one not fancy that it was the harmony of those Eolian harps which poets imagine in the midst of forests and mountains? Do you see the shadowy forms moving among those clouds? Do you discern the winged feet of those who deck the sky with such hangings? Those sounds refresh the soul; Heaven will ere long shed the blossoms of spring, a flash blazes up from the Pole. Let us fly—it is time!'

In an instant they had replaced their snow-shoes and were descending the Falberg by the steep slopes down to the valley of the Sieg. Some miraculous intelligence guided their steps—or rather their flight. When a crevasse covered with snow lay before them, Seraphitus seized Minna, and with a swift rush dashed, scarce the weight of a bird, across the frail bridge that covered a chasm. Many a time, by just pushing his companion, he deviated slightly to avoid a cliff or tree, a block of stone which he seemed to see through the snow, as certain mariners, accustomed to the sea, discern a shoal by the colour, the eddy, and the recoil of the water.

When they had reached the roads of the Siegdahl, and they could proceed without hesitation in a straight line down to the ice on the fiord, Seraphitus spoke.

'You have nothing more to say to me?' he asked Minna.

'I fancied,' replied the girl respectfully, 'that you wished to think in silence.'

'Make haste, pretty one, the night is falling,' said he.

Minna was startled at hearing the new voice, so to speak, in which her guide spoke. A voice as clear as a girl's, dissipating the fantastic flashes of the dream in which she had been walking. Seraphitus was abdicating his manly strength, and his looks were losing their too keen insight. Presently the fair couple were gliding across the fiord; they reached the snowy level that lay between the margin of the bay and the first houses of Jarvis; then, urged by the waning light, they hurried up to the parsonage as if climbing the steps of an enormous stairway.

'My father will be uneasy,' said Minna.

'No,' said Seraphitus.

At this moment they stopped at the porch of the humble dwelling where Pastor Becker, the minister of Jarvis, sat reading while awaiting his daughter's return to supper.

'Dear Pastor Becker,' said Seraphitus, 'I have brought your daughter back safe and sound.'

'Thank you, Mademoiselle,' said the old man, laying his spectacles on the book. 'You must be tired.'

'Not in the least,' said Minna, on whose brow her companion had just breathed.

'Dear child, will you come to tea with me the evening after to-morrow?'

'With pleasure, dear.'

'Pastor Becker, will you bring her?'

'Yes, Mademoiselle.'

Seraphitus nodded prettily, bowed to the old man, and left, and in a few minutes was in the courtyard of the Swedish Castle. An old servant of eighty came out under the wide verandah carrying a lantern. Seraphitus slipped off the snow-shoes with the grace of a woman, ran into the sitting-room, dropped on to a large divan covered with skins, and lay down.

'What will you take?' said the old man, lighting the enormously long tapers that are used in Norway.

'Nothing, David; I am too tired.'

Seraphitus threw off the sable-lined pelisse, wrapped it about him, and was asleep. The old servant lingered a few minutes in loving contemplation of the strange being resting under his gaze, and whose sex the most learned man would have been puzzled to pronounce on. Seeing him as he lay, wrapped in his usual garment, which was as much like a woman's dressing-gown as a man's overcoat, it was impossible to believe that the slender feet that hung down, as if to display the delicacy with which nature had moulded them, were not those of a young girl; but the brow, the profile, seemed the embodiment of human strength carried to its highest pitch.

'She is suffering, and will not tell me,' thought the old man. 'She is dying like a flower scorched by too fierce a sunbeam.'

And the old man wept.

II

SERAPHITA

In the course of the evening David came into the drawing-room.

'I know who is coming,' said Seraphita in a sleepy voice. 'Wilfrid may come in.'

On hearing these words, a man at once appeared, and came to sit down by her.

'My dear Seraphita, are you ill? You look paler than usual.'

She turned languidly towards him, after tossing back her hair like a pretty woman overpowered by sick headache and too feeble to complain.

'I was foolish enough,' said she, 'to cross the fiord with Minna; we have been up the Falberg.'

'Did you want to kill yourself?' cried he, with a lover's alarm.

'Do not be uneasy, my good Wilfrid, I took great care of your Minna.'

Wilfrid struck the table violently with his hand, took a few steps towards the door with an exclamation of pain; then he came back and began to reproach her.

'Why so much noise if you suppose me to be suffering?' said Seraphita.

'I beg your pardon, forgive me,' said he, kneeling down. 'Speak harshly to me, require anything of me that your cruel woman's caprice may suggest to you as hardest to be endured, but, my beloved, do not doubt my love! You use Minna like a hatchet to hit me with again and again. Have some mercy!'

'Why speak thus, my friend, when you know that such words are useless?' she replied, looking at him with a gaze that became at last so soft that what Wilfrid saw was not Seraphita's eyes, but a fluid light shimmering like the last vibrations of a song full of Italian languor.

'Ah! anguish cannot kill!' cried he.

'Are you in pain?' said she, in a voice which produced on him the same effect as her look. 'What can I do for you?'

'Love me, as I love you!'

'Poor Minna!' said she.

'I never bring any weapons!' cried Wilfrid.

'You are in a detestable temper,' said Seraphita, smiling. 'Have I not spoken nicely, like the Parisian ladies of whom you tell me love stories?'

Wilfrid sat down, folded his arms, and looked gloomily at Seraphita.

'I forgive you,' said he, 'for you know not what you do.'

'Oh!' retorted she, 'every woman from Eve downwards knows when she is doing good or evil.'

'I believe it,' said he.

'I am sure of it, Wilfrid. Our intuition is just what makes us so perfect. What you men have to learn, we feel.'

'Why, then, do you not feel how much I love you?'

'Because you do not love me.'

'Great God!'

'Why then do you complain of anguish?'

'You are terrible this evening, Seraphita. You are a perfect demon!'

'No; but I have the gift of understanding, and that is terrifying. Suffering, Wilfrid, is a light thrown on life.'

'Why did you go up the Falberg?'

'Minna will tell you; I am too tired to speak. You must talk, you who know everything, who have learnt everything and forgotten nothing, and have gone through so many social experiences. Amuse me; I am listening.'

'What can I tell you that you do not know! Indeed, your request is a mockery. You recognise nothing that is worldly, you analyse its terminology, you demolish its laws, its manners, feelings, sciences, by reducing them to the proportions they assume when we take our stand outside the globe.'

'You see, my friend, I am not a woman. You are wrong to love me. What! I quit the ethereal regions of strength you attribute to me; I make myself humble and insignificant to stoop after the manner of the poor female of every species—and you at once uplift me! Then, when I am crushed and broken, I crave your help; I want your arm, and you repulse me! We do not understand each other.'

'You are more malignant this evening than I have ever known you.'

'Malignant?' said she, with a flashing look that melted every sentiment into one heavenly emotion. 'No; I am weary, that is all. Then, leave me, my friend. Will not that be a due exercise of your rights as a man? We are always to charm you, to recreate you, always to be cheerful, and have no whims but those that amuse you.—What shall I do, my friend? Shall I sing, or dance, when fatigue has deprived me of voice and of the use of my legs? Yes, gentlemen, at our last gasp we still must smile on you! That, I believe, you call your sovereignty!—Poor women! I pity them. You abandon them when they are old; tell me, have they then no longer heart or soul? Well, and I am more than a hundred, Wilfrid. Go—go to kneel at Minna's feet.'

'Oh, my one, eternal love!'

'Do you know what eternity is? Be silent, Wilfrid. —You desire me, but you do not love me.—Tell me, now, do not I remind you of some coquette you have met?'

'I certainly do not see you now as the pure and heavenly maiden I saw for the first time in the church at Jarvis.'

As he spoke Seraphita passed her hands over her brow, and when she uncovered her face Wilfrid was astonished at the religious and saintly expression it wore.

'You are right, my friend. I am always wrong to set foot on your earth.'

'Yes, beloved Seraphita, be my star.—Never descend from the place whence you shed such glorious light on me.'

He put out his hand to take the girl's, but she withdrew it, though without disdain or anger. Wilfrid hastily rose and went to stand by the window, turning towards it so that Seraphita should not see a few tears that filled his eyes.

'Why these tears?' she asked. 'You are no longer

a boy, Wilfrid. Come back to me, I insist.—You are vexed with me, when it is I who should be angry. You see I am not well, and you compel me by some foolish doubts to think and speak, or participate in whims and ideas that fatigue me. If you at all understood my nature, you would have given me some music; you would have soothed my weariness; but you love me for your own sake, not for myself.'

The storm which raged in Wilfrid's soul was stilled by these words; he came back slowly to contemplate the bewitching creature who reclined under his eyes, softly pillowed, her head resting on her hand, and her elbow in an insinuating attitude.

'You fancy I do not like you,' she went on. 'You are mistaken. Listen, Wilfrid. You are beginning to know a great deal, and you have suffered much. Allow me to explain your thoughts. You wanted to take my hand.'

She sat up, and her graceful movement seemed to shed gleams of light.

'Does not a girl who allows a man to take her hand make a promise, and ought she not to keep it? You know full well that I can never be yours. Two feelings rule the love that attracts the women of this earth: either they devote themselves to suffering creatures, degraded and guilty, whom they desire to comfort, to raise, to redeem; or they give themselves wholly to superior beings, sublime and strong, whom they are fain to worship and understand—by whom they are too often crushed. You have been degraded, but you have purified yourself in the fires of repentance, and you now are great; I feel myself too small to be your equal, and I am too religious to humble myself to any power but that of the Most High. Your life, my friend, may thus be stated; we are in the North, among the clouds, where abstractions are familiar to our minds.'

'Seraphita, you kill me when you talk so,' he replied. 'It is always torture to me to see you thus apply the

monstrous science which strips all human things of the properties they derive from time, space, form, when you regard them mathematically under some ultimate simplest expression, as geometry does with bodies, abstracting dimensions from substance.'

'Well, Wilfrid, I submit.—Look at this bearskin rug which my poor David has spread. What do you think of it?'

'I like it very well.'

'You did not know I had that *Doucha Greka*?'

It was a sort of pelisse made of cashmere lined with black fox-skin; the name means, 'warm to the soul.'

'Do you suppose,' said she, 'that any sovereign in any court possesses a fur wrap to match it?'

'It is worthy of her who wears it?'

'And whom you think very beautiful?'

'Human words are inapplicable to her; she must be addressed heart to heart.'

'Wilfrid, it is kind of you to soothe my griefs with such sweet words—which you have spoken to others.'

'Good-bye.'

'Stay. I love you truly, and Minna too, believe me, but to me you two are one being. Thus combined you are as a brother, or, if you will, a sister to me. Marry each other, let me see you happy before quitting for ever this sphere of trial and sorrow. Dear me! the most ordinary women have made their lovers obey their will. They have said "Be silent!" and their lovers were mute. They have said "Die!" and men have died. They have said "Love me from afar!" the lovers have remained at a distance like courtiers in the presence of a king. They have said "Go, marry!" and the men have married. Now, I want you to be happy, and you refuse. Have I then no power?—Well, Wilfrid—come close to me.—Yes, I should be sorry to see you married to Minna; but when you see me no more,

then—promise me to make her your wife, Heaven intends you for each other.'

'I have heard you with rapture, Seraphita. Incomprehensible as your words are, they are like a charm. But what, indeed, do you mean?'

'To be sure; I forget to be foolish, to be the poor creature in whose weakness you delight. I torture you, and you came to this wild country to find rest—you who are racked by the fierce throes of misunderstood genius, worn out by the patient labours of science, who have almost stained your hands by crime, and worn the chains of human justice.'

Wilfrid had fallen half dead on the floor. Seraphita breathed on the young man's brow, and he fell calmly asleep, lying at her feet.

'Sleep, rest,' said she, rising.

After laying her hands on Wilfrid's forehead, the following phrases fell from her lips, one by one, each in a different tone, but alike melodious and full of a kindly spirit that seemed to emanate from her countenance in misty undulations like the light shed by the heathen goddess on the beloved shepherd in his sleep.

'I may show myself to you, dear Wilfrid, as I am, to you who are strong.

'The hour is come, the hour when the shining lights of the future cast their reflections on the soul, the hour when the soul moves, feeling itself free.

'It is granted to me now to tell you how well I love you. Do you not see what my love is, a love devoid of self-interest, a feeling full of you alone, a love which follows you into the future, to light up your future, for such love is the true light. Do you now perceive how ardently I long to see you released from the life that is a burthen to you, and nearer to the world where love rules for ever? Is not love for a lifetime only sheer suffering? Have you not felt a longing for eternal love? Do you not now understand to what ecstasy a

being can rise when he is double through loving Him who never betrays his love, Him before whom all bow and worship?

'I would I had wings, Wilfrid, to cover you withal; I would I had strength to give you that you might know the foretaste of the world where the purest joys of the purest union known on earth would cast a shadow in the light that there perennially enlightens and rejoices all hearts!

'Forgive a friendly soul for having shown you in one word a vision of your faults with the charitable intention of lulling the acute torments of your remorse. Listen to the choir of forgiveness! Refresh your spirit by inhaling the dawn that shall rise for you beyond the gloom of death! Yes, for your life lies there.

'My words shall wear for you the glorious garb of dreams, and appear as forms of flame descending to visit you. Rise! Rise to the heights whence men see each other truly, though tiny and crowded as the sands of the seashore. Humanity is unrolled before you as a ribbon: look at the endless hues of that flower of the gardens of Heaven.—Do you see those who lack intelligence, those who are beginning to be tinged by it, those who have been tried, those who are in the circle of love, and those in wisdom, who aspire to celestial illumination?

'Do you understand, through these thoughts made visible, the destination of man—whence he comes, whither he is tending? Keep on your road. When you shall reach your journey's end, you will hear the trumpet call of omnipotence and loud shouts of victory, and harmonies, only one of which would shake the earth, but which are lost in a world where there is neither East nor West.

'Do you perceive, dear, much-tried one, that but for the torpor and the veil of sleep, such visions would rend and carry away your intellect, as the wind of a tempest rends and sweeps away a light sail, and would rob a man

for ever of his reason? Do you perceive that the soul alone, raised to its highest power, and even in a dream, can scarce endure the consuming effluence of the Spirit?

'Fly, fly again through the realms of light and glory, admire, hurry on. As you fly you are resting, you go forward without fatigue. Like all men, you would fain dwell always thus bathed in these floods of fragrance and light, where you are wandering free of your unconscious body, speaking in thought only. Hurry, fly, rejoice for a moment in the wings you will have earned when love is so perfect in you that you shall cease to have any senses, that you shall be all intellect and all love! The higher you soar, the less can you conceive of the gulf beneath.—Now, gaze at me for a moment, for you will henceforth see me but darkly, as you behold me by the light of the dull sun of the earth!'

Seraphita stole up with her head gently bent on one side, her hair flowing about her in the airy pose which the sublimest painters have attributed to messengers from heaven; the folds of her dress had the indescribable grace which makes the artist, the man to whom everything is an expression of feeling, stop to gaze at the exquisite flowing veil of the antique statue of Polyhymnia.

Then she extended her hand and Wilfrid rose.

When he looked at Seraphita, the fair girl was lying on the bearskin, her head resting on her hand, her face calm, her eyes shining. Wilfrid gazed at her in silence, but his features expressed respectful awe, and he looked at her timidly.

'Yes, dear one,' said he at last, as if answering a question, 'whole worlds divide us! I submit; I can only adore you. But what is to become of me thus lonely?'

'Wilfrid, have you not your Minna?'

He hung his head.

'Oh, do not be so scornful! a woman can understand everything by love. When she fails to understand, she feels; when she cannot feel, she sees; when she can neither see, nor feel, nor understand—well, that angel of earth divines your need, to protect you and to hide her protection under the grace of love.'

'Seraphita, am I worthy to love a woman?'

'You are suddenly grown very modest! Is this a snare? A woman is always so much touched to find her weakness glorified!—Well, the evening after to-morrow, come to tea. You will find our good pastor Becker, and you will see Minna, the most guileless creature I ever knew in this world.—Now leave me, my friend; I must say long prayers this evening in expiation of my sins.'

'How can you sin?'

'My poor, dear friend, is not the abuse of power the sin of pride? I have been, I think, too arrogant to-day.—Now go. Till to-morrow.'

'Till to-morrow!' Wilfrid feebly echoed, with a long look at the being of whom he desired to carry away an indelible memory.

Though he meant to leave, he remained standing for some moments outside, looking at the lights that beamed from the windows of the Swedish castle.

'What was it that I saw?' he asked himself. 'No, it was not a single being, but a whole creation. I retain, of that world seen through veils and mists, a ringing echo like the remembrance of departed pain, or like the dizziness caused by dreams in which we hear the moaning of past generations mingling with the harmonious voices of higher spheres, where all is light and love. Am I awake? Do I still slumber? Have I not yet opened my sleeping eyes, those eyes before whose sight luminous spaces stretch into infinitude, eyes that can discern those spaces?—In spite of the night and the cold, my head is still on fire. I will go to the manse.

Between the pastor and his daughter I may recover my balance.'

But he did not yet leave the spot whence he could see into Seraphita's sitting-room. This mysterious being seemed to be the radiant centre of a circle which formed an atmosphere about her rarer than that which surrounds others: he who came within it found himself involved in a vortex of light and of consuming thoughts. Wilfrid, obliged to struggle against this inexplicable force, did not triumph without considerable efforts; but when he had got out of the precincts of the house, he recovered his freedom of will, walked quickly to the parsonage, and presently found himself under the lofty wooden porch that served as an entrance hall to Pastor Becker's house. He pushed open the first door, packed with birch bark, against which the snow had drifted, and knocked eagerly at the inner door, saying—

'Will you allow me to spend the evening with you, Pastor Becker?'

'Yes,' was the answer in two voices speaking as one.

On entering the parlour, Wilfrid was gradually brought back to real life. He bowed very cordially to Minna, shook hands with the minister, and then looked about him on a scene which soothed the excitement of his physical nature, in which a process was going on resembling that which sometimes takes place in men accustomed to long contemplation. When some powerful conception carries away a man of science or a poet on its chimæra-like wings, and isolates him from the external surroundings that hedge him in on earth, soaring with him through those boundless regions where vast masses of fact appear as abstractions and the most stupendous works of nature seem but images, woe to him if some sudden noise rouses his senses and recalls his wandering soul to its prison of bone and flesh! The collision of the two powers: body and spirit, one of which has something of the invisible element of light-

ning; while the other, like all tangible forms, has a certain soft resistancy which for the moment defies destruction—this collision, or, to be accurate, this terrible reunion, gives rise to unspeakable suffering. The body has cried out for the fire that consumes it, and the flame has recaptured its prey. But this fusion cannot take place without the ebullition, the crepitation and convulsions, of which chemistry affords visible examples when two hostile elements are sundered that have been joined by its act.

For some days past, whenever Wilfrid went to Seraphita's house, his body there fell into an abyss. By a single look this wonderful creature translated him in the spirit to the sphere whither meditation carries the learned, whither prayer transports the pious soul, whither his eye can carry the artist, and sleep can waft some dreamers; for each there is a call bidding him to that empyrean void, for each a guide to lead him there—for all there is anguish in the return. There alone is the veil rent, there alone is Revelation seen without disguise —an ardent and awful disclosure of the unknown sphere of which the soul brings back nought but fragments. To Wilfrid, an hour spent with Seraphita was often like the dream so dear to the opium eater, in which each nerve-fibre becomes the focus of radiating rapture. He came away exhausted, like a girl who should try to keep up with the pace of a giant.

The sharp, punishing cold began to subdue the agony of trepidation caused by the re-amalgamation of the two elements in his nature thus violently wrenched asunder; then he always made his way to the manse, attracted to Minna by his thirst for the scenes of homely life, as an European traveller thirsts for his native land when home-sickness seizes him in the midst of the fairy splendours that tempted him to the East.

At this moment the visitor, more exhausted than he had ever been before, dropped into a chair and looked about

him for some minutes, like a man aroused from sleep. Pastor Becker and his daughter, accustomed no doubt to their guest's eccentricity, went on with their occupations.

The room was decorated with a collection of Norwegian insects and shells. These curiosities, ingeniously arranged on the background of yellow pinewood with which the wall was wainscoted, formed a coloured ornamentation to which tobacco smoke had imparted a soberer tone. At the further end, opposite the door, was an enormous wrought-iron stove, carefully rubbed by the maidservant till it shone like polished steel.

Pastor Becker was seated in a large armchair, covered with worsted work, near the stove and in front of a table, his feet in a foot-muff, while he read from a folio supported on other books to form a sort of desk. On his right stood a beer-jug and a glass; on his left a smoky lamp fed with fish oil. The minister was a man of about sixty years; his face of the type so often painted by Rembrandt: the small, keen eyes set in circles of fine wrinkles under thick grizzled brows; white hair falling in two silky locks from beneath a black velvet cap; a broad, bald forehead, and the shape of face which a heavy chin made almost square, and, added to this, the self-possessed calm that betrays to the observer some conscious power—the sovereignty conferred by wealth, by the judicial authority of the burgomaster, by the conviction of Art, or the stolid tenacity of happy ignorance. The handsome old man, whose substantial build revealed sound health, was wrapped in a dressing-gown of rough cloth with no ornament but the binding. He gravely held a long meerschaum pipe in his mouth, blowing off the tobacco smoke at regular intervals, and watching its fantastic spirals with a speculative eye, while endeavouring, no doubt, to assimilate and digest by meditation the ideas of the author whose works he was studying.

On the other side of the stove, near the door that

led into the kitchen, Minna was dimly visible through the fog of smoke, to which she seemed to be inured. In front of her, on a small table, were the various implements of a needlewoman; a pile of towels and stockings to be mended, and a lamp like that which shone on the white pages of the book in which her father seemed to be absorbed. Her fresh, young face, delicately pure in outline, harmonised with the innocence that shone on her white brow and in her bright eyes. She sat forward on her chair, leaning a little towards the light to see the better, unconsciously showing the grace of her figure. She was already dressed for the evening in a white calico wrapper; a plain, cambric cap, with no ornament but its frill, covered her hair. Though lost in some secret meditation, she counted without mistake the threads in the towel, or the stitches in her stocking. Thus she presented the most complete and typical image of woman born to earthly duties, whose eye might pierce the clouds of the sanctuary, while a mind at once humble and charitable kept her on the level of man. Wilfrid, from his armchair between the two tables, contemplated the harmonious picture with a sort of rapture; the clouds of smoke were not out of keeping.

The single window which gave light to the room in the summer was now carefully closed. For a curtain, an old piece of tapestry hung from a rod in heavy folds. There was no attempt at the picturesque or showy—austere simplicity, genuine homeliness, the unpretentiousness of nature, all the habits of domestic life free from troubles and anxieties. Many dwellings leave the impression of a dream; the dazzling flash of transient pleasure seems to hide a ruin under the chill smile of luxury; but this parlour was sublimely real, harmonious in colour, and apt to suggest patriarchal ideas of a busy and devout life.

The silence was broken only by the heavy step of the maid preparing the supper, and by the singing in the pan

of the dried fish she was frying in salt butter, after the fashion of the country.

'Will you smoke a pipe?' said the pastor presently, when he thought that Wilfrid would heed him.

'No thank you, dear Pastor Becker,' he replied.

'You seem less well than usual this evening,' said Minna, struck by the visitor's weak voice.

'I am always so when I have been to the castle.'

Minna was startled.

'A strange creature dwells there, Pastor Becker,' he went on after a pause. 'I have been six months in the village, and have never dared to question you about her; and to-night I have to do violence to my feelings even to speak of her. At first I greatly regretted to find my travels interrupted by the winter, and to be obliged to remain here; for the last two months, however, the chains binding me to Jarvis have been more closely riveted, and I fear I may end my days here.—You know how I first met Seraphita, and the impression made on me by her eyes and her voice, and how at last I was admitted to visit her though she receives nobody. On the very first day, I came to you for information concerning that mysterious creature. Then began for me the series of enchantments——'

'Of enchantments?' exclaimed the pastor, shaking out the ashes of his pipe into a coarse pan of sand that served him as a spittoon. 'Are enchantments possible?'

'You, certainly, who at this very moment are so conscientiously studying Jean Wier's book of *Incantations*, will understand the account I can give you of my sensations,' Wilfrid replied quickly. 'If we study nature attentively, alike in its great revolutions and in its minutest works, it is impossible not to admit the possibility of enchantment—giving the word its fullest meaning. Man can create no force; he can but use the only existing force, which includes all others, namely, Motion—the incomprehensible Breath of the Sovereign Maker of the Universe. The elements are too completely

separated for the hand of man to combine them; the only miracle he can work consists in the mingling of two hostile substances. Even so, gunpowder is akin to thunder!

'As to effecting an act of creation, and that suddenly! —All creation needs time, and time will neither hurry nor turn backwards at our bidding. Hence, outside us, plastic nature obeys laws whose order and procedure cannot be reversed by any human effort.

'But after conceding this to mere matter, it would be unreasonable to deny the existence, within us, of a vast power, of which the effects are so infinitely various that past generations have not yet completely classified them. I will say nothing of man's faculty of abstracting his mind, of comprehending nature in the limits of speech, a stupendous fact, of which common minds think no more than they think out the act of motion, but which led Indian Theosophists to speak of creation by the Word, to which they also attributed the contrary power. The tiniest item of their daily food—a grain of rice, whence proceeds a whole creature, which presently results in a grain of rice again—afforded them so complete a symbol of the creative Word and the synthetical Word, that it seemed a simple matter to apply the system to the creation of worlds.

'Most men would do well to be content with the grain of rice that lies at the origin of every genesis. Saint John, when he said that the Word was in God, only complicated the difficulty.

'But the fruition, the germination, and the blossoming of our ideas is but a trifle if we compare this property, which is distributed among so many men, with the wholly personal faculty of communicating to it certain more or less efficient forces by means of concentration, and thus raising it to the third, ninth, or twenty-seventh power, giving it a hold on masses, and obtaining magical results by concentrating the action of Nature.

What I call enchantments are the stupendous dramas played out between two membranes on the canvas of the brain. In the unexplored realms of the spiritual world we meet with certain beings armed with these astounding faculties—comparable only to the terrible powers of gases in the physical world—beings who can combine with other beings, can enter into them as an active cause, and work magic in them, against which their hapless victims are defenceless; they cast a spell on them, override them, reduce them to wretched serfdom, and crush them with the weight and magnificent sway of a superior nature; acting, now like the gymnotus which electrifies and numbs the fisherman; now, again, like a dose of phosphorus which intensifies the sense of life or hastens its projection; sometimes like opium, which lulls corporeal nature, frees the spirit from its bondage, sends it soaring above the world, shows it the universe through a prism, and extracts for it the nourishment that best pleases it; and sometimes like catalepsy, which annuls every faculty to enhance a single vision.

'Miracles, spells, incantations, witchcrafts, in short all the facts that are incorrectly called supernatural, can only be possible and accounted for by the authority with which some other mind compels us to accept the effects of a mysterious law of optics which magnifies, or diminishes, or exalts creation, enables it to move within us independently of our will, distorts or embellishes it, snatches us up to heaven, or plunges us into hell—the two terms by which we express the excess of rapture or of pain. These phenomena are within us, not outside us.

'The being we call Seraphita seems to me to be one of those rare and awe-inspiring spirits to whom it is given to constrain men, to coerce nature, and share the occult powers of God. The course of her enchantments on me began by her compelling me to silence. Every time I dared wish to question you about her, it seemed to me that I was about to reveal a secret of which I was

bound to be the impeccable guardian; whenever I was about to speak, a burning seal was set on my lips, and I was the involuntary slave of this mysterious prohibition. You see me now, for the hundredth time, crushed, broken, by having played with the world of hallucinations that dwells in that young thing, to you so gentle and frail, to me the most ruthless magician. Yes—to me she is a sorceress who bears in her right hand an invisible instrument to stir the world with, and in her left the thunderbolt that dissolves everything at her command. In short, I can no longer behold her face; it is unendurably dazzling.

'I have for the last few days been wandering round this abyss of madness too helplessly to keep silence any longer. I have, therefore, seized a moment when I find courage enough to resist the monster that drags me to her presence without asking whether I have strength enough to keep up with his flight.—Who is she? Did you know her as a child? Was she ever born? Had she parents? Was she conceived by the union of sun and ice?—She freezes and she burns; she comes forth and then vanishes like some coy truth; she attracts and repels me; she alternately kills and vivifies me; I love her and I hate her!—I cannot live thus. I must be either in heaven altogether, or in hell.'

Pastor Becker, his refilled pipe in one hand and in the other the stopper, listened to Wilfrid with a mysterious expression, glancing occasionally at his daughter, who seemed to understand this speech, in harmony with the being it referred to. Wilfrid was as splendid as Hamlet struggling against his father's ghost, to whom he speaks when it rises visible to him alone amid the living.

'This is very much the tone of a man in love,' said the good man simply.

'In love!' cried Wilfrid, 'yes, to ordinary apprehensions; but, my dear Mr. Becker, no words can describe the frenzy with which I rush to meet this wild creature.'

'Then you do love her?' said Minna reproachfully.

'Mademoiselle, I endure such strange agitation when I see her, and such deep dejection when I see her not, that in any other man they would be symptoms of love; but love draws two beings ardently together, while between her and me a mysterious gulf constantly yawns, which chills me through when I am in her presence, but of which I cease to be conscious when we are apart. I leave her each time in greater despair; I return each time with greater ardour, like a scientific inquirer seeking for Nature's secrets and for ever baffled; like a painter who yearns to give life to his canvas, and wrecks himself and every resource of art in the futile attempt.'

'Yes, that strikes me as very true,' said the girl.

'How should you know, Minna?' asked the old man.

'Ah! father, if you had been with us this morning to the summit of the Falberg, and had seen her praying, you would not ask me. You would say, as Wilfrid did the first time he saw her in our place of worship, "She is the Spirit of Prayer!"'

A few moments of silence ensued.

'It is true!' cried Wilfrid. 'She has nothing in common with the creatures who writhe in the pits of this world.'

'On the Falberg!' the old pastor exclaimed. 'How did you manage to get there?'

'I do not know,' said Minna. 'The expedition is to me now like a dream of which only the remembrance survives. I should not believe in it, perhaps, but for this substantial proof.'

She drew the flower from her bosom and showed it to him. They all three fixed their eyes on the pretty saxifrage, still quite fresh, which under the gleam of the lamps shone amid the clouds of smoke like another light.

'This is supernatural,' said the old man, seeing a flower in bloom in the winter.

'An abyss!' cried Wilfrid, fevered by the perfume.

'The flower fills me with rapture,' said Minna. 'I fancy I can still hear his speech, which is the music of the mind, as I still see the light of his gaze, which is love.'

'Let me entreat you, my dear Pastor Becker, to relate the life of Seraphita—that enigmatical flower of humanity whose image I see in this mysterious blossom.'

'My dear guest,' said the minister, blowing a puff of tobacco-smoke, 'to explain the birth of this being, it will be necessary to disentangle for you the obscurest of all Christian creeds; but it is not easy to be clear when discussing the most incomprehensible of all revelations, the latest flame of faith, they say, that has blazed on our ball of clay.—Do you know anything of Swedenborg?'

'Nothing but his name. Of himself, his writings, his religion, I am wholly ignorant.'

'Well, then, I will tell you all about Swedenborg.'

III

SERAPHITA—SERAPHITUS

After a pause, while the pastor seemed to be collecting his thoughts, he went on as follows:—

'Emanuel von Swedenborg was born at Upsala, in Sweden, in the month of January 1688, as some authors say, or, according to his epitaph, in 1689. His father was bishop of Skara. Swedenborg lived to the age of eighty-five, and died in London on the 29th March 1772. I use the word "died" to express a change of condition only. According to his disciples, Swedenborg has been at Jarvis and in Paris since that time.—Permit me, my dear friend,' said the pastor, with a gesture to check interruption, 'I am relating the tale without affirming or denying the facts. Listen, and when I have done you can think what you choose. I will warn

you when I myself judge, criticise, or dispute the doctrines, so as to show my intellectual neutrality between reason and the man himself.

'Emanuel Swedenborg's life was divided into two distinct phases,' Becker went on. 'From 1688 till 1745 Baron Emanuel von Swedenborg was known in the world as a man of vast learning, esteemed and beloved for his virtues, always blameless, and invariably helpful. While filling important public posts in Sweden, he published, between 1709 and 1740, several important books on mineralogy, physics, mathematics, and astronomy, which were of value in the scientific world. He invented a method of constructing docks to receive vessels; he treated many very important questions, from the height of the flood-tide to the position of the earth in space. He discovered the way to construct more efficient locks on canals, as well as simpler methods for the smelting of metals. In short, he never took up a science without advancing it.

'In his youth he studied Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and the Oriental languages, and became so familiar with these tongues that several celebrated professors constantly consulted him, and he was enabled to discover in Tartary some traces of the earliest book of God's Word, called the *Book of the Wars of Jehovah*, and of the Judgments mentioned by Moses (Numbers xxi. 14, 15), by Joshua, Jeremiah, and Samuel. The wars of the Lord are said to be the historical portion, and the Judgments the prophetic portion, of this book, written prior to *Genesis*. Swedenborg even asserted that the Book of Jasher, or of the Upright, mentioned by Joshua, existed in Eastern Tartary with the worship by Correspondences. A Frenchman, I have been told, has recently confirmed Swedenborg's anticipations by announcing the discovery at Bagdad of several parts of the Bible unknown in Europe.

'In 1785, on the occasion of the discussion on animal

magnetism started in Paris, and raised almost throughout Europe, in which most men of science took an eager part, Monsieur de Thomé defended Swedenborg's memory in a reply to the assertions so rashly made by the Commissioners appointed by the King of France to inquire into this subject. These gentlemen stated that there was no theory accounting for the action of the lodestone, whereas Swedenborg had made it his study so early as in 1720. Monsieur de Thomé took the opportunity to point out the reasons for the neglect in which the most celebrated savants had left the name of the learned Swede, so as to be free to plunder his volumes and use his treasures in their own works. "Some of the most illustrious," said Monsieur de Thomé, alluding to Buffon's *Theory of the Earth*, "are mean enough to dress in the peacock's plumage without giving him the credit." Finally, by several convincing quotations from Swedenborg's encyclopædic writings, he proved that this great prophet had outstripped by many centuries the slow progress of human learning; and, indeed, to read his works is enough to carry conviction on this point.

'In one passage he is the precursor of the present system of chemistry, announcing that the products of organic nature can all be decomposed and resolved into two pure elements; that water, air, and fire are not elements; in another he goes in a few words to the heart of magnetic mystery, and thus anticipates Mesmer.—In short,' said the minister, pointing to a long shelf between the stove and the window, on which were books of various sizes, 'there are seventeen works by him; one of them, published in 1734, *Studies in Philosophy and Mineralogy*, consists of three folio volumes.

'These books, which bear witness to Swedenborg's practical knowledge, were given to me by Baron Seraphitus, his cousin, and Seraphita's father.

'In 1740 Swedenborg sank into complete silence,

never relaxing it excepting to renounce temporal studies and to think exclusively of the spiritual world.

'He received his first commands from heaven in 1745. This is how he relates his call:—

'"One evening, in London, after he had dined, eating heartily, a thick mist filled the room. When the darkness cleared away, a being that had assumed a human form rose up in a corner of the room and said in a terrible voice, 'Do not eat so much.' He then fasted completely. Next evening the same man was visible, radiant with light, and said to him—

'"'I am sent by God, who has chosen thee to set forth to men the meaning of His word and His creation. I will dictate what thou shalt write.'"

'The vision lasted but a few minutes. The angel, he said, was clad in purple.

'During that night the eyes of his *inner man* were opened and enabled to see into the heavens, into the world of spirits, and into hell, three different circles, where he met persons he had known who had perished from their human state, some long ago, and some quite recently. From that time Swedenborg always lived the spiritual life, and remained in this world as a being sent from God.

'Though his mission was disputed by the incredulous, his conduct was visibly that of a being superior to human weakness. In the first instance, though limited by his means to the strictest necessaries, he gave away immense sums, and was known to be the means of restoring, in various commercial towns, some great houses of business that had failed, or were failing. No one who appealed to his generosity went away without being helped on the spot. An incredulous Englishman, going in search of him, met him in Paris, and he has recorded that Swedenborg's doors were always left open. One day his servant complained of this neglect, which exposed him to suspicion if his master should be robbed.

'"Let him make his mind easy," said Swedenborg, smiling; "I forgive him want of faith; he cannot see the guardian who keeps watch before my door."

'And, in fact, in whatever country he might be living, his doors were never shut, and he never lost anything.

'When he was at Gothenburg, a town sixty miles away from Stockholm, three days before the news arrived of the great fire that raged at Stockholm, he had announced the hour at which it had begun, adding that his house was unharmed—which was true.

'The Queen of Sweden, when at Berlin, told the King, her brother, that one of her ladies being summonsed to repay a sum of money which she knew that her husband had returned before his death, being unable to find the receipt, had gone to Swedenborg and begged him to inquire of her husband where the proof of payment could be. On the following day Swedenborg told her the place where the receipt was; then, in accordance with the lady's desire, he called upon the dead man to appear to his wife, and she saw her husband, in a dream, in the dressing-gown he had worn before his death, and he showed her the document in the place mentioned by Swedenborg, where in fact it lay hidden.

'One day, on sailing from London in the ship of a Captain Dixon, he heard a lady asking if there were a good stock of provisions on board.

'"You will not need a very large quantity," said he. "In a week, at two o'clock, we shall be in the port of Stockholm," and it was so.

'The state of second sight, into which Swedenborg could pass at will in relation to earthly things, astonishing as it was to all who knew him, by its marvellous results, was no more than a weaker development of his power of seeing into the skies.

'Of all his visions, those in which he travelled to other astral worlds are not the least curious, and his

descriptions are no doubt surprisingly artless in their details. A man whose great scientific acquirements are beyond question, who combined in his brain conception, will, and imagination, would certainly have invented something better if he had invented at all. Nor does the fantastic literature of the East contain anything that can have suggested the idea of this bewildering narrative full of poetic germs, if we may compare a work of faith to the writings of Arab fancy.

'The account of his being snatched up by the angel who guided him in his first voyage is sublime to a degree as far beyond the poems of Klopstock, Milton, Tasso, and Dante, as the earth, by God's will, is from the sun. This chapter, which forms the introduction to his *Treatise on the Astral Worlds*, has never been published; it remains among the oral traditions left by Swedenborg to the three disciples who were dearest to him. M. Silverichm has it in writing. Baron Seraphitus sometimes tried to tell me of it; but his memory of his cousin was so vivid that he stopped after a few words, and fell into a reverie from which nothing could rouse him.

'The discourse in which the angel proved to Swedenborg that those planets are not created to wander uninhabited, crushes all human science, the Baron assured me, under the grandeur of its divine logic.

'According to the Seer, the inhabitants of Jupiter do not affect the sciences, which they call Shades; those of Mercury object to the expression of ideas by words, which they think too material, and they have a language of the eye; those of Saturn are persistently tormented by evil spirits; those of the Moon are as small as children of six years old, their voice proceeds from the stomach, and they creep about; those of Venus are of gigantic stature, but very stupid, and live by robbery; part of that planet, however, is inhabited by beings of great gentleness, who live loving to do good. Finally,

he describes the customs of the people who dwell on those globes, and gives an account of the general purpose of their existence as part of the universe in terms so precise, adding explanations which agree so well with the effects of their apparent motion in the system of the universe, that some day, perhaps, scientific men will drink of these luminous founts. Here,' said the pastor, taking down a volume and opening it at a page where a marker was placed, 'these are the words which conclude this great work: "If any one should doubt my having been transported to so many astral earths, let him remember my remarks as to distances in the other life. They exist only in relation to the external form of man; now I, having been inwardly constituted like the angelic spirits of those globes, have been enabled to know them."

'The circumstances to which we owed the residence in this district of Baron Seraphitus, Swedenborg's dearly loved cousin, made me intimately familiar with every fact of the life of that extraordinary man.

'Not long since he was accused of imposture in some European newspapers, which reported the following facts as related in a letter from the Chevalier Beylon. Swedenborg, "informed," it was said, "by some senators of a secret correspondence between the late Queen of Sweden and her brother, the Prince of Prussia, revealed the contents to that Princess, leaving her to believe that he had acquired the information by supernatural means. A man of the highest credit, Monsieur Charles-Léonard von Stahlhammer, Captain of the King's Guard and Knight of the Sword, refuted this calumny in a letter."'

The pastor hunted through some papers in his table-drawer, found a newspaper, and handed it to Wilfrid, who read aloud the following letter:—

'STOCKHOLM, *May* 13, 1788.'

'I have read with astonishment the letter reporting

the interview between the famous Swedenborg and Queen Louisa-Ulrica. All the circumstances are falsified; and I hope the writer will pardon me if I show him how greatly he is mistaken, by giving here an exact account, of which the truth can be attested by several personages of distinction who were present, and who are still living.

'In 1758, not long after the Prince of Prussia's death, Swedenborg came to Court; he was in the habit of doing so very regularly. No sooner did the Queen see him than she asked, "By the way, Baron Assessor, have you seen my brother?" Swedenborg said he had not, and the Queen replied, "If you should see him, greet him from me."

'She had no idea in saying this but of a jest; it did not occur to her to ask for any information concerning her brother.

'A week later—not twenty-four days, nor for a private audience—Swedenborg came again, but so early that the Queen had not yet left her own apartment, known as the white room, where she was chatting with her ladies of honour and other ladies about the Court. Swedenborg did not wait for the Queen to come out. He went into her private room and spoke in her ear. The Queen, quite astounded, turned faint, and it took some time to revive her. When she had recovered herself, she said to those about her, "God alone and my brother could know what he has just told me!" And she said he had spoken of her last correspondence with the Prince, of which the subject had been known to themselves only.

'I cannot explain how Swedenborg gained his knowledge of this secret; but what I can aver on my honour is that neither Count H——, as the author of the letter states, nor any one else, had intercepted or read the Queen's letters. The Senate had at that time allowed her to write to her brother in the strictest confidence,

regarding the correspondence as a matter perfectly indifferent to the State. It is evident that the writer of that letter knew nothing of Count H——'s character. That distinguished gentleman, who did his country important service, combines with intellectual talent fine qualities of the heart, and his advanced years have not deteriorated his noble gifts. Throughout his official career he has been equally remarkable for enlightened political views and the most scrupulous integrity, and he was always the declared enemy of secret intrigues and covert devices, which he regarded as the basest means to any end.

'Nor did the writer know Swedenborg the Assessor; the only weak point in this thoroughly honest man was his belief in apparitions and spirits; but I knew him for a long time, and I can positively state that he was as well assured that he certainly did talk and mingle with spirits as I am at this moment of writing these lines. As a citizen and as a friend, he was a man of absolute integrity, with a horror of imposture, and he led an exemplary life.

'Hence the account given of the incident by the Chevalier de Beylon is without foundation; and the visit said to have been paid to Swedenborg, at night, by Counts H—— and T—— is a pure invention.

'The writer of the letter may rest assured that I am anything rather than a follower of Swedenborg; nothing but the love of truth has moved me to relate with accuracy a fact that has often been told with details that are incorrect; and I affirm what I have here written to be the truth, and sign it with my name.'

'The proofs of his mission given by Swedenborg to the families of Prussia and Sweden no doubt formed a basis for the belief he inspired in several personages of the two Courts,' the pastor went on, replacing the newspaper in his drawer. 'At the same time, I cannot tell you all the facts of his material and visible life; his

habits precluded their being exactly known. He lived in strict retirement, never trying to grow rich or to rise to fame. He was even remarkable for a sort of repugnance to proselytising; he spoke freely to very few persons, and never communicated those gifts but to those who were conspicuous for faith, wisdom, and love. He could read at a glance the frame of mind in which each one approached him, and could make seers of those whom he desired to touch with his inward Word.

'After the year 1745 his disciples never saw him do a single thing from a merely human motive.

'One man only, a Swedish priest named Matthésius, accused him of madness. By a singular coincidence this Matthésius, the enemy of Swedenborg and his writings, went mad not long after, and was living a few years since at Stockholm on a pension allowed him by the King of Sweden.

'A discourse in honour of Swedenborg was composed with great care as to the details of his life, and read at a general meeting in the Hall of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Stockholm, by Monsieur de Sandel, Councillor to the College of Mines, in 1786. Finally, a deposition laid before the Lord Mayor of London testifies to the smallest circumstances of Swedenborg's last illness and death under the ministrations of Pastor Férélius, a Swedish ecclesiastic of the highest respectability. The persons attesting declared that, far from recanting, Swedenborg always averred the truth of his writings.

'"In a hundred years' time," said he, "my doctrines will govern the Church."

'He foretold very precisely the day and hour of his death. On that day, Sunday, March 29th, 1772, he asked what o'clock it was.

'"Five o'clock," was the answer.

'"It is all over," said he. "God bless you!"

'And ten minutes after he died quite calmly with a

gentle sigh. Thus, moderation, simplicity, and solitude were the features of his life.

'Whenever he had finished writing a treatise, he took ship to have it printed in London or in Holland, and never talked about it. He thus published twenty-seven works in all, written, as he declared, at the dictation of angels. Whether or no this be true, few men are capable of enduring this flaming language.

'Here they all are,' said the minister, pointing to an upper shelf on which stood about sixty volumes. 'The seven books on which the Spirit of God has shed its brightest light are :—*The Delights of Wisdom in Conjugal Love ; Heaven and Hell ; The Apocalypse Explained ; An Exposition of the Inward Sense ; On the Divine Love ; The True Christian Religion ; The Angelic Wisdom of the Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence of those who share the Eternity and Immensity of God.*

'His explanation of the *Apocalypse* begins with these words,' said the pastor, opening the volume that was lying near him : '"Herein I have written nothing of my own ; I have spoken at the bidding of the Lord, who said to John, by the same angel, 'Thou shalt not seal the words of this prophecy.'"

'My dear sir,' the good man went on, looking at Wilfrid, 'many a winter night have I quaked in every limb while reading the tremendous works in which this man sets forth the greatest marvels in perfect good faith.

'"I have seen," says he, "the heavens and the angels. The spiritual man sees spiritual man far more clearly than the earthly man sees earthly man. I obey the command of the Lord who hath given it to me to do. Men are free not to believe me ; I cannot put others into the state into which God hath put me. It is not in my power to make them hold conversation with the angels, nor to work a miracle in predisposing their understanding ; they themselves must be the agents of their angelical exaltation. For twenty-eight years now I have dwelt in the

spiritual world with the angels, and yet on earth with men; for it hath pleased the Lord to open the eyes of my spirit as he opened the eyes of Paul, of Daniel, and of Elisha."

'Certain persons, however, have had visions of the spiritual world through the complete severance of their external body and their inner man by somnambulism. In that state, Swedenborg tells us in his *Treatise on Angelic Wisdom*, man may be raised to celestial light, because, the physical senses being in abeyance, heavenly influences act on the inner man without interference.

'A good many persons who do not doubt that Swedenborg had celestial revelations, still do not regard all his writings as equally stamped with Divine inspiration. Others insist on a complete acceptance of Swedenborg, while confessing his obscurities; but they think that it was the imperfection of earthly language that hindered the prophet in expressing his spiritual visions, so that such obscurities disappear before the eyes of those who are regenerate by faith; to use a striking expression of his favourite disciple's, the flesh is begotten externally.

'To poets and writers he is infinitely marvellous; to seers it is all absolute truth. His descriptions have been a matter of scandal to some Christians; critics have laughed at the "celestial substance" of his temples, his golden palaces, his magnificent mansions where angels flutter and play; others have ridiculed his groves of mystical trees, and gardens where flowers have speech, where the air is white, and mystical gems—sardonyx, carbuncle, chrysolite, chrysoprase, cyanite, chalcedony, and beryl, the Urim and Thummim—are endowed with motion, express celestial truths, and may be questioned, since they reply by variations of light (*True Religion*, 217, 218). Some very good men will not recognise his worlds where colours are heard in delicious concerts, where words are flames, and the Word is written in

inflected letters (*True Religion*, 278). Even in the North some writers have made fun of his gates of pearl, of the diamonds with which the houses of his New Jerusalem are paved and furnished, where the humblest utensils are made of the rarest materials.

'"But," his disciples argue, "though such substances are sparely distributed in this world, is that any reason why they should not be abundant in another? On earth they are but earthly, while in heaven they are seen under celestial aspects in relation to the angelic state." And Swedenborg would quote on such points the great words of Jesus Christ, "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John iii. 12.)

'I, sir, have read Swedenborg from beginning to end,' the pastor went on, with an emphatic gesture. 'I may say it with pride, since I have preserved my reason. As you read you must either lose your wits or become a seer. Though I have escaped both forms of madness, I have often felt unknown raptures, deep amazement, inward joy such as can only come of the fulness of truth, the evidence of heavenly illumination. Everything here below shrinks, dwindles, as the soul studies the burning pages of those writings. It is impossible not to be struck with astonishment on reflecting that within the space of thirty years this man published twenty-five quarto volumes on the truths of the spiritual world, written in Latin, the shortest containing five hundred pages, and all in small print. He left twenty more, it is said, in London, in the care of his nephew, M. Silverichm, formerly chaplain to the King of Sweden. Certainly the man who, between twenty and sixty, spent himself in publishing a sort of encyclopedia, must have had supernatural help to enable him to compose these prodigious treatises, at an age when the powers of man are beginning to fail.

'In these works there are thousands of propositions,

all numbered, none of them contradictory. Method, preciseness, and a collected mind are everywhere conspicuous, all based on the one fact of the existence of angels. His *True Religion*, in which his whole dogma is summed up, is a work of powerful lucidity, and was conceived and carried out when he was eighty-three years of age. His ubiquity, his omniscience, have indeed never been disproved by his critics or his enemies.

'Nevertheless, even when I was soaked, so to speak, in this torrent of celestial illumination, God did not open my inward eye; I judged of these writings by the reason of an unregenerate man. I have often been of opinion that Swedenborg, the *inspired*, must have misunderstood the angels. I laughed at many visions, which, according to the seers, I ought reverently to believe in. I could not, for instance, appreciate the inflected writing of the angels, nor their belts of thicker or thinner gold. Though the statement, "There are solitary angels," at first struck me as singularly pathetic, I could not reconcile this loneliness with their manner of marriage. I did not see why the Virgin Mary should wear white satin robes in heaven. I dared question why the giant demons Enakim and Hephilim came again and again to fight with the Cherubim in the Apocalyptic fields of Armageddon. I fail to see how the Satanic and heavenly angels can still hold discussions. Baron Seraphitus replied to me that these details referred to the angels who are yet on earth in human form.

'The visions of the Swedish prophet are often disfigured by grotesque touches. One of his *Memorabilia*—the name he gives them—begins with these words: "I saw the spirits met together, and they had hats on their heads." In another of these *Memorabilia* he received from heaven a small paper on which, he says, he saw the letters used by primitive races, composed of curved lines with little rings curling upwards. For

clearer proof of this communication from heaven I should have liked him to deposit this document with the Royal Academy of Sciences at Stockholm.

'After all, I may be wrong; the material absurdities that are scattered throughout his works have spiritual meanings perhaps. Otherwise, how can we account for the growing influence of his doctrine? His followers now number more than seven hundred thousand souls, partly in the United States of America, where many sects have joined them in a body, and partly in England, where there are seven thousand Swedenborgians in the city of Manchester alone. Men no less distinguished by their learning than by their worldly rank—some in Germany, and some in Prussia and the North—have publicly adopted Swedenborg's beliefs, which indeed are more consolatory than those of many another Christian communion.

'I should now like to expound to you in a few short words the capital points of the doctrines set forth by Swedenborg to his Church; but such an abridgement, from memory, would necessarily be defective. I can, therefore, only enlarge on the arcana connected with the birth of Seraphita.'

Here the pastor paused while meditating apparently to collect his reminiscences, and then he went on:—

'Having proved mathematically that man shall live for ever in an upper or a lower sphere, Swedenborg gives the title of angelic spirits to such beings as, in this world, are prepared for heaven, where they become angels. According to him, God did not create angels independently; there are none but those who have been human beings on earth. Thus the earth is the nursery ground for heaven. The angels are not angels by original nature; they are transformed into angels by an intimate union with God which God never refuses, the very essence of God being never negative, but always active (*Angelic Wisdom*).

'Angelic spirits, then, go through three natures of love, for man can only be regenerate by stages (*True Religion*). First, love of self: the supreme expression of it is human genius, of which the works are worshipped. Next, love of the world at large, which produces prophets and those great men whom the earth accepts as guides, and hails as divine. Finally, love of heaven, which forms angelic spirits. These spirits are, so to speak, the flowers of humanity, which is epitomised, and strives to be epitomised, in them. They must have either the love or the wisdom of heaven; but they must dwell in that love before they dwell in wisdom. Thus the first transformation of man is to love. To achieve this first grade, in his previous existences he must have gone through hope and charity, which engender in him the gifts of faith and prayer. The ideas gained by the exercise of these virtues are transmitted to each new human embodiment within which the metamorphoses of the inner man are hidden. Nothing avails separately; hope is inseparable from charity, faith from prayer; the four faces of this figure are equally important. "For lack of one virtue," says he, "the angelic spirit is as a flawed pearl." Thus each existence is a sphere into which are absorbed the celestial treasures of the former one. The great perfection of the angelic spirits comes of this mysterious progress, by which nothing is lost of the qualities successively acquired till they attain to their most glorious incarnation; for, at every fresh transformation, they unconsciously lose something of the flesh and its works.

'When he lives in love man has thrown off all his evil passions; hope, charity, faith, and prayer have, to use the word of Isaiah, *winnowed* his inner man, which must no longer be polluted by any earthly affection. Hence the great lesson in Saint Luke, "Provide yourselves a treasure in the heavens that faileth not," and the teaching of Jesus Christ that we should leave this world

to men, for it is theirs, and purify ourselves and go to the Father.

'The second transformation is to wisdom. Wisdom is that apprehension of heavenly things to which the spirit rises through love. The spirit of love has triumphed over force; as a result of having conquered every earthly passion, he loves God blindly; but the spirit of wisdom has intelligence and knowledge of why he loves. The wings of the first are spread and bear him up to God; the wings of the second are folded in awe derived from knowledge: he knows God. One incessantly desires to see God, and soars up to Him; the other stands near to Him and trembles.

'The union of a spirit of love with a spirit of wisdom lifts the creature into the divine state in which the soul is woman and the body man—the final expression of humanity, in which the spirit is supreme over the form, and the form still contends with the divine spirit; for the form, which is the flesh, is ignorant and rebellious, and would fain remain gross. It is this supreme conflict which gives rise to the inexpressible anguish which the heavens alone can see, and which Christ endured in the Garden of Olives. After death, the first heaven opens to receive this purified compound human nature. Thus men die in despair, while spirits die in ecstasy. Hence the natural state, in which are all unregenerate beings; the spiritual state, in which are the angelic spirits; and the divine state, in which the angel dwells before bursting its husk, are the three degrees of existence by which man attains to heaven.

'A sentence of Swedenborg's will admirably explain to you the difference between the natural and the spiritual states: "To men," says he, "the natural passes into the spiritual; they regard the world under its visible forms, and perceive it in a reality adjusted to their senses. But to the angelic spirit the spiritual passes into the

natural; he regards the world in its inmost spirit, not under its outer form."

'Hence our human sciences are but the analysis of form. The learned of this world are purely superficial, as their knowledge is; their inner man is of no avail except to preserve an aptitude for apprehension and truth. The angelic spirit goes far beyond this. His knowledge is the thought of which human science is the mere utterance; he derives a knowledge of things from the Word by studying the correspondences through which the worlds are harmonised with the heavens. The Word of God was written entirely by such correspondences; it contains a hidden or spiritual meaning which cannot be understood without the study of correspondences. "There are," says Swedenborg (*Celestial Doctrine*), "innumerable arcana in the inward meaning of the correspondences."

'Those men who have laughed to scorn the books in which the prophets have treasured the Word, were in such a state of ignorance as men are in, who, in this world, knowing nothing of a science, mock the truths of that science. To know the correspondences of the Word with heavenly things, to know the correspondences that exist between the visible and ponderable things of the earthly globe and invisible and imponderable things of the spiritual world, is to "have the heavens in your understanding."

'Every object of every creation proceeded from the hand of God, and has, therefore, necessarily a hidden meaning, as we see in those grand words of Isaiah, "The earth is as a garment" (Isaiah li. 6). This mysterious tie between the smallest atoms of matter and the heavens constitutes what Swedenborg calls a *Celestial Arcanum*. Indeed, his *Treatise on the Celestial Arcana*, in which he explains the correspondences or symbolism of the natural and spiritual, containing, as Jacob Boehm has it, the "sign and sealing of all things,' contains no less than

thirteen thousand propositions, filling sixteen volumes. "This wonderful apprehension of correspondences which the grace of God vouchsafed to Swedenborg," says one of his disciples, "is the secret of the interest taken in his works." According to this commentator, "everything is derived from heaven, everything returns to heaven. The prophet's words are sublime and lucid; he speaks in the heavens, and is understood on earth. A volume might be written on any one of his phrases." And, among a thousand others, he quotes this text: "The realm of heaven," says Swedenborg (*Arcana Celestia*), "is the realm of impulsion. Action takes form in heaven, and thence in the world, and by degrees in the minutest details of earthly life; earthly effects being thus continuous with heavenly causes, the result in every case is correspondent and symbolical. Man is the link of union between the Natural and the Spiritual."

'Angelic spirits, then, inevitably know the correspondences that link each earthly thing to heaven, and they know the inmost sense of the prophetic words which foretell their evolution. Thus, to these spirits everything here below has its hidden meaning. The smallest flower is a thought, a life answering to some feature of the Great Whole, of whom they have a persistent intuition. To them the adulteries and debauchery of which the Scripture and the Prophets speak, and which are often misapprehended by self-styled scribes, signify the state of the souls who in this world persist in debasing themselves with earthly affections, and so confirm their divorce from heaven. Clouds symbolise the veils that shroud God. The candlesticks, the shewbread, the horses and riders, the whores, the jewels,—everything in the Scriptures has for them a super-sensual meaning, and reveals the future of earthly history in its relation to heaven. They can all enter into the truth of the declarations of Saint John, which human science demonstrates, and substantially proves at a later time, such as this,

"pregnant," says Swedenborg, "with many human sciences": "I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (Rev. xxi. 1). They know the suppers where "they eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captives, and the flesh of mighty men," to which [the fowls] are bidden by an angel standing in the sun (Rev. xix. 17, 18). They see the woman with wings, clothed with the sun, and the man always armed. "The horse of the Apocalypse," says Swedenborg, "is the visible image of the human intellect ridden by death, because it bears in itself the element of its own destruction." Finally, they recognise the nations hidden under forms which, to the ignorant, seem grotesque.

'When a man is prepared to receive the prophetical insufflation of correspondences, the Spirit of the Word moves within him; he then sees that creations are but transformations; it gives vitality to his intellect, and a burning thirst for truth which can only be quenched in heaven. In proportion to the greater or less perfection of his inner man he can conceive of the power of the angelic spirit; and guided by desire, the least perfect state of unregenerate man, he proceeds to hope, which opens before him the world of spirits, and thence to prayer, which is the key of heaven.

'What human creature could fail to desire to become worthy of passing into the sphere of those intellects that live in secret by love or wisdom? During their life on earth those spirits remain pure; they neither see, nor think, nor speak as other men do.

'There are two modes of perception—the external and the internal. Man is wholly external; the angelic spirit is wholly internal. The spirit penetrates the sense of numbers; it masters them all and knows their meanings. It is lord of motion, and is one with everything by ubiquity: "One angel is present to another whenever he will," says the Swedish Seer (*Angelic Wisdom concerning*

Divine Love), for he has the power of escaping from the body, and sees the heavens as the prophets saw them, and as Swedenborg himself saw them.

'"In this state," he says, in the *True Religion*, "the spirit of a man is borne from one place to another, his body remaining where it is, a state in which I lived for twenty-six years." This is the meaning to be given to the Bible phrase, "The Spirit carried me."

'Angelic wisdom is to human wisdom what the numberless forces of Nature are to its action, which is single. Everything lives again, moves, and exists in the spirit, for it is in God, as it is expressed in these words of Saint Paul, *In Deo sumus, movemur et vivimus* (In God we live and move and have our being, Acts xvii. 28). Earth offers no obstacle to it, as the Word offers no difficulties. Its nearness to the divine state enables it to see the thought of God veiled by the Word, just as the spirit dwelling inwardly can communicate with the hidden meaning of all the things of this world. Science is the language of the temporal world; love is that of the spiritual world. Man, indeed, describes more than he explains; while the angelic spirit sees and understands. Science saddens man; love enraptures the angel; science is still seeking, love has found. Man judges of Nature in relation to itself; the angelic spirit judges of it in relation to heaven. In short, to the spirits everything speaks.

'The spirits are in the secret of the reciprocal harmony of creations; they are in accord with the spirit of sounds, with the spirit of colours, with the spirit of vegetable life; they can question minerals, and minerals reply to their thoughts. What, to them, are the learning and the treasures of earth when they can constantly command them by their sight, and when the worlds of which men think so much are for the spirits no more than the topmost step whence they will fly up to God? Heavenly love, or heavenly wisdom, are visibly with them, seen by

the elect in a halo of light that envelopes them. Their innocence, of which a child's innocence is the external image, has knowledge which children have not; they are innocent, and they know.

'"And," says Swedenborg, "the innocence of heaven makes so deep an impression on the soul, that those who enjoy it feel a rapture which goes with them all through life, as I myself have experienced." "It is enough, perhaps," he says elsewhere, "to have the smallest inkling of it to transform one for ever, and, by desiring to go to heaven, to enter into the sphere of hope."

'His doctrine of marriage may be summed up in a few words:—

'"The Lord took the beauty and grace of man's life and infused them into woman. When man is disunited from this beauty and elegance of life, he is austere, sad, or savage; when he is reunited to them, he is happy, he is complete."

'The angels are for ever in the perfection of beauty. Their marriages take place with miraculous ceremonies. To such an union, from which no children are born, man brings Understanding, woman brings Will; they become one being—one flesh on earth; then, after putting on the heavenly body, they go to heaven. On earth, in the natural state, the mutual affection of the two sexes leads to lust, which is an *effect*, producing fatigue and disgust; but in their heavenly form, the pair, having become one spirit, finds in itself a cause of perpetual joys. Swedenborg had seen such an union of spirits, who, as Saint Luke has written, "neither marry nor are given in marriage," and this union leads to none but spiritual pleasures. An angel offered to take him to witness such a marriage, and bore him away on his wings; the wings are only symbolical, and not an earthly reality. He clothed him in his festal garment; and Swedenborg, seeing himself arrayed in light, asked the reason.

'"On such occasions," replied the angel, "our robes

light up and shine and are nuptial garments" (*The Delight of Wisdom in Conjugal Love*).

'He then saw two angels who came—one from the South, and the other from the East. The angel from the South rode in a chariot drawn by two white horses, whose reins were of the colour and the radiance of the morning; but when they came close to him in heaven, he saw no more of the chariot or horses. The angel from the East, clothed in purple, and the angel from the South, in hyacinth colour, rushed together like two breaths of wind, and were one; one was an angel of Love, and the other an angel of Wisdom. Swedenborg's guide told him that on earth these two angels had been bound by an inward sympathy, and constantly united, though divided by space. Consent, which is the essence of happy marriage on earth, is the habitual condition of angels in heaven. Love is the light of their world.

'The perpetual ecstasy of the angels is produced by the faculty, bestowed on them by God, of giving back to Him the joy they have in Him. This reciprocity of the infinite constitutes their life. In heaven they too become infinite by partaking of the essential nature of God, who is self-subsistent. Such is the vastness of the heavens where the angels dwell, that if man were endowed with vision as constantly rapid as the transmission of light from the sun to the earth, and if he gazed through all eternity, his eyes would find no horizon to rest on. Light alone can be an emblem of the joys of heaven. "It is," says he (*Angelic Wisdom*), "an effluence of the virtue of God, a pure emanation from His glory, compared to which our most brilliant day is dark. It is omnipotent, it renews everything, and cannot be absorbed; it surrounds the angel, putting him into contact with God by infinite joys which are felt to multiply and reproduce themselves to infinity. This light kills the man who is not prepared to receive it. No one on earth, or indeed in the heavens, can look on

God and live. This is why it is written (Exodus xix. 12, 21-23), "Set bounds unto the people round about [the Mount] . . . lest they break through . . . and many of them perish." And again (Exodus xxxiv. 29-35), "When Moses came down with the two tables of testimony, the skin of his face shone, and Moses put a vail upon his face till he had done speaking with the people." The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ also testifies to the light shed by a messenger from heaven and the extreme joy of the angels in being for ever bathed in it. "His face," says Saint Matthew (xvii. 2), "did shine as the sun, and His raiment was as white as the light . . . and a bright cloud overshadowed the disciples."

'When a planet is inhabited only by beings who reject the Lord and misprize His Word, when the angelic spirits have gathered from the four winds, God sends a destroying angel to alter the whole mass of that rebellious world, which, in the vast spaces of the universe, is to Him what an infertile seed is in the natural world. As he approaches that globe, the destroying angel, riding on a cornet, reverses it on its axis and makes the continents become the bottom of the sea, the highest mountains then are islands, and the lands hitherto covered by the seas reappear in all their freshness, obeying the laws of Genesis; thus the Word of God is in power once more on a new earth, which everywhere shows the effects of terrestrial waters and celestial fires. The light the angel brings down from heaven makes the sun pale. Then, as Isaiah saith (ii. 10, 19), men will enter into the holes of the rocks and hide themselves in the dust. "They will cry to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. vi. 16). The Lamb is the great emblem of the angels who are unrecognised and persecuted on earth.

'Christ Himself hath said, "Blessed are they that mourn! Blessed are the meek! Blessed are the peacemakers." All Swedenborg is there: Suffer, believe, and

love. To love truly, must we not have suffered; must we not believe? Love begets strength, and strength gives wisdom; this is intelligence, for strength and wisdom include will. Is not true intellect composed of knowledge, will, and wisdom, the three attributes of the angelic spirit?

'If the universe has a meaning, that surely is the worthiest of God,' said Monsieur Saint-Martin to me when I saw him during his visit to Sweden.

'But,' the minister went on, after a pause, 'of what value can these shreds be, snatched from a work so vast that the only way to give you an idea of it is to compare it to a river of light, a torrent of flame? When a man plunges into it, he is carried away by an overwhelming flood. Dante Alighieri's poem seems a mere speck to the reader who will dive into the innumerable passages in which Swedenborg has given actuality to the heavenly spheres, just as Beethoven builds up palaces of harmony out of thousands of notes, and architects construct cathedrals of thousands of stones. He flings you up to infinite heights, where your mind sometimes fails to bear you up. It is necessary certainly to have a powerful brain if you are to come back sane and safe to our social notions.

'Swedenborg was especially attached to Baron Seraphitz, whose name, according to an old Swedish custom, had from time immemorial taken the Latin suffix *us*. The Baron was the Swedish prophet's most zealous disciple; the eyes of his inner man had been opened by the Seer, who had prepared him to live in conformity with commands from on high. He was in search of a woman with the angelic spirit, and Swedenborg showed her to him in a vision. His bride was the daughter of a shoemaker in London; in her, said Swedenborg, the life of heaven shone brightly, and she had gone through the first tests. After the prophet was translated, the Baron came to Jarvis to solemnise his heavenly nuptials in the practice of prayer. For my part, Sir, I, who am no seer,

could only note the earthly life of the couple, and it was undoubtedly that of the saints whose virtues are the glory of the Roman Church. They alleviated the sufferings of the inhabitants, giving them a portion which does not suffice to live on without work, but which is then sufficient for their needs; those who lived with them never saw them moved to anger or impatience; they were invariably gentle and beneficent, full of amiability, graciousness, and true kindness; their marriage was the harmony of two souls in constant union. Two eider-ducks in equal flight, a sound and its echo, the thought and the word, are but imperfect images of that union. Here they were loved by everybody with an affection which can only be compared to the love of plants for the sun.

'The wife was simple in her manners and beautiful to behold; her face was lovely, and her dignity worthy of the most august personage.

'In 1783, in the twenty-sixth year of her age, this woman bore a child; it was a time of solemn rejoicing. The husband and wife took leave of the world, telling me that they had no doubt that they should be transformed when the child should have shed the garb of flesh, which would need their care until she should have received strength to live by herself. The child was born, and was this Seraphita with whom we are just now concerned; for the nine months before her birth her father and mother lived in greater retirement than before, uplifting themselves to heaven by prayer. Their hope was that they might see Swedenborg, and faith procured its fulfilment. On the day of Seraphita's birth, Swedenborg appeared in Jarvis, and filled the room where the babe was born with light. His words, it is said, were:—

"The work is accomplished; the heavens rejoice!"

'The servants in the house heard strange sounds of music, brought, they declared, by the winds from the four points of the compass.

'The spirit of Swedenborg led the father out of the

house and out on the fiord, where it left him. Some men of Jarvis, going up to the Baron, heard him repeating these soothing words from Scripture—" How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings ! "

'I was setting out from the manse to go to the castle, intending to baptize the child, and carry out the duties enjoined on me by law, when I met the Baron.

'" Your ministrations are superfluous," said he ; " our child is to be nameless on earth. You will not baptize with earthly waters one who has been bathed in fires from heaven. This child will always be a flower ; you will not see it grow old ; you will see it pass away. You have existence, it has life ; you have external senses, it has not ; it is wholly inward." The words were uttered in a supernatural voice, which impressed me even more than the brightness of his face, which shed a radiance. His whole appearance was a realisation of the fantastic ideas we form of inspired men, as we read the prophecies in the Bible. Still, such effects are not rare in our mountains, where the nitre formed in the permanent snows produces singular effects on our persons.

'I asked him the cause of his agitation.

'" Swedenborg has appeared ; I have just parted from him ; I have breathed the air of heaven," said he.

'" Under what form did he appear to you ? " I asked.

'" Under his mortal aspect, dressed as he was the last time I saw him in London with Richard Shearsmith, near Coldbath Fields, in July 1771. He had on his shot velveteen coat with steel buttons, a high waistcoat, a white cravat, and the same imposing wig, with heavy, powdered curls at the side, and the hair combed back from the forehead, showing that broad and luminous brow in harmony with his large, square face, so full of calm power. I recognised his nose with its open, ardent nostrils ; the mouth that always smiled—an angel's mouth, from which fell these words of promised happi-

ness, 'We meet again, soon!' And I felt the glory of heavenly love."

'The conviction stamped on the Baron's face prohibited any discussion; I listened in silence; his voice had an infectious fervour that warmed me to the core; his enthusiasm stirred my heart, as another man's anger can thrill one's nerves. I followed him, without speaking, home to his house, where I saw the nameless child lying mysteriously wrapped on her mother's bosom. Seraphita heard me come in, and raised her head towards me; her eyes were not those of an ordinary infant; to express the impression they produced on me, I can only say they already saw and understood.

'The childhood of this predestined being was marked by some extraordinary circumstances of climate. For nine years our winters were milder and our summers longer than usual. This phenomenon gave rise to much discussion among the learned; but their explanations, which seemed inadequate to the Doctors of the Academy, made the Baron smile when I repeated them to him.

'Seraphita was never seen perfectly nude, as children are sometimes; she was never touched by the hand of man or woman; she lay spotless on her mother's breast, and she never cried. Old David will confirm these facts if you question him about his mistress, for whom he feels such veneration as the king whose name he bears had for the Ark of God.

'At the age of nine the child began to be absorbed in prayer. Prayer is her life; you saw her in our church on Christmas Day, the only day she ever comes there. She is placed apart from the other worshippers by a considerable distance. If this space is not left about her, she is ill. Indeed, she spends most of her time indoors. The details of her life are, however, unknown; she never shows herself; her faculties, her feelings are essentially inward; she is commonly in the state of mystical contemplation, which, as Papist writers tell us, was familiar

to the first Christian recluses, in whom dwelt the tradition of Christ's teaching. Her understanding, her soul, her body, everything about her, is as virginal as the snow on our mountains. At ten years old she was what you see her now.

'When she was nine her father and mother died at the same instant without pain, without any visible malady, after naming the hour at which they should cease to breathe. She, standing at their feet, looked on them with a calm eye, displaying neither grief, nor pain, nor joy, nor curiosity; her father and mother smiled at her.

'When we went in to carry away the two bodies, she said—

'"Take them away!"

'"Seraphita," said I, 'for we called her by that name, "are you not grieved by your father's and mother's death? They loved you so well."

'"Dead?" said she. "No, they are still in me. This is nothing," she added, pointing to the bodies they were taking away.

'This was the third time I had seen her since her birth. It is difficult to see her in church; she stands near the pillar that supports the pulpit, in such a dark corner that it is hardly possible to discern her features.

'Of all the servants of the house, none were left at the time of that event but old David, who, though he is eighty-two years old, manages to do all his mistress needs. Some of the people of Jarvis have strange tales about the girl. Their stories having assumed some consistency in a land that is greatly addicted to mysteries, I set to work to study Jean Wier's "Treatise on Sorcery," and other works on demonology, in which the effects on man of the supernatural (so called) are recorded, in search of facts analogous to what are ascribed to her——'

'Then you do not believe in her?' asked Wilfrid.

'Indeed, yes,' said the pastor with simplicity, 'in so far that I regard her as a most fantastic creature, spoilt by

her parents, who have turned her brain by the religious notions I have set forth to you.'

Minna shook her head in a gentle expression of negation.

'Poor girl!' the pastor went on, 'she has inherited from her parents the fatal enthusiasm which misleads mystics and makes them more or less crazy. She fasts in a way that drives poor David to despair. The good old man is like some frail plant that trembles at a breath of wind and basks in the smallest gleam of sunshine. His mistress, whose incomprehensible language he has adopted, is to him the breeze and sunshine; to him her feet are diamonds, her forehead crowned with stars; she moves environed by a white and luminous halo; her voice has an accompaniment of music; she has the gift of becoming invisible. Ask to see her; he will tell you that she is wandering through astral worlds. It is difficult to believe such fables. Every such miracle, you know, is more or less like the story of the Golden Tooth: we have a Golden Tooth at Jarvis, that is all.

'For instance, Duncker, the fisherman, declares that he has seen her plunging into the fiord and coming to the surface in the form of an eider-duck, or walking on the waves during a storm. Fergus, who tends the herds on the *sæter*, says that, in rainy weather, he has seen the sky always clear over the Swedish castle, and always blue over Seraphita's head if she goes out. Several women hear the chords of an immense organ when Seraphita comes to church, and ask their neighbours quite seriously if they also do not hear it.

'However, my daughter, to whom Seraphita has taken a great fancy these two years past, has heard no music, and has not perceived the heavenly perfumes which embalm the air, they say, wherever she goes. Minna has often come home full of a simple girl's admiration for the beauties of the spring; she is enraptured by the fragrance of the first tender larch

shoots, the fir-trees, and the flowers they have enjoyed together; but after our long winter nothing can be more natural than such intense delight. There is nothing very remarkable in the conversation of that being, is there, my child?'

'His secrets are not mine,' replied Minna. 'When I am with him, I know all things; away from him, I know nothing; with him, I cease to be myself; away from him, I forget that more perfect life. Seeing him is as a dream, of which my remembrance depends on his will. I may have heard, when with him, the music of which Bancker's wife and Erikson's speak, and forget it when we are apart; I may have perceived those celestial perfumes and have beheld marvels, and yet know nothing of them here.'

'What has most surprised me since I first knew her,' said the pastor to Wilfrid, 'is that she should allow you to approach her.'

'To approach her!' said the stranger. 'She has never allowed me to kiss nor even to touch her hand. The first time I saw her she abashed me by her look, and said, "You are welcome here; you were due to come." It was as though she knew me. I trembled.—My fear makes me believe in her.'

'And my love,' said Minna, without a blush.

'Are you making fun of me?' said the pastor, laughing with good humour; 'you, my child, in calling yourself a Spirit of Love; and you, sir, in making yourself out to be a Spirit of Wisdom?'

He drank off a glass of beer, and did not observe a singular look which Wilfrid gave to Minna.

'Jesting apart,' Becker went on, 'I was greatly amazed to hear that those two crazy girls had gone to-day for the first time to the top of the Falberg; but is not that some exaggeration? The girls must have simply climbed some hill; the summit of the Falberg is inaccessible.'

'Father,' said Minna, in some agitation, 'I must then have been in the power of the demon; for I climbed the Falberg with him.'

'This is a serious matter,' said the pastor. 'Minna has never told a lie.'

'My dear sir,' said Wilfrid, 'I can assure you, Seraphita exerts the most extraordinary power over me; I know not what words can give any idea of it. She has told me things which no one but I could know.'

'Somnambulism!' cried the old man. 'Various cases of that kind are reported by Jean Wier as phenomena easy to account for, and known of old in Egypt.'

'Lend me the theosophical works of Swedenborg,' said Wilfrid. 'I long to plunge into those lakes of light; you have made me thirst for them.'

Pastor Becker handed a volume to Wilfrid, who immediately began to read. It was about nine o'clock in the evening. The maid had just brought in the supper, and Minna made the tea. The meal ended, all three sat silently occupied; the pastor read Jean Wier's 'Treatise on Demonology'; Wilfrid lost himself in the study of Swedenborg; Minna sewed and dreamed over her recollections. It was a thoroughly Norwegian scene, a peaceful, studious evening, full of thought—a flower under the snow. Wilfrid, as he read the writings of the prophet, was alive only to his inward senses. Now and again the pastor, with a half-serious, half-ironical gesture, pointed him out to Minna, who smiled rather sadly. To Minna, Seraphitus smiled down upon them, floating above the cloud of tobacco smoke in which they were wrapped.

Midnight struck. Suddenly the outer door was violently pushed open; heavy but hasty steps, the steps of a terrified old man, were heard in the sort of small hall between the two doors. Then David burst into the room.



'Violence! Violence!' he cried. 'Come! all of you, come! The Satans are unchained; they wear mitres of flame! Adonis, Vertumnus, the Sirens! They are tempting her as Jesus was tempted on the mountain. Come and drive them out.'

'Do you recognise the language of Swedenborg, pure and unmixed?' said the pastor, laughing.

But Wilfrid and Minna were gazing in terror at old David, who, with streaming hair and wild eyes, his legs trembling, and covered with snow, stood shaking as if he were buffeted by a stormy wind.

'What has happened?' asked Minna.

'Well, the Satans hope and purpose to conquer her.'

The words made Wilfrid's heart beat.

'For nearly five hours she has been standing up with her eyes raised to heaven, her arms uplifted; she is in torment; she calls upon God. I cannot cross the line; hell has set Vertumni to guard it. They have raised a barrier of iron between her and her old David. If she wants me, what can I do? Help me! Come and pray!'

The poor old man's despair was terrible to behold.

'The glory of God protects her; but if she were to yield to violence?' he said, with persuasive good faith.

'Silence, David, do not talk so wildly. These are facts to be verified.—We will go with you,' said the pastor, 'and you will see that there are neither Vertumni in the house, nor Satans, nor Sirens.'

'Your father is blind,' David whispered to Minna.

Wilfrid, on whom his first reading of a treatise by Swedenborg, hasty as it had been, had produced a powerful effect, was already in the passage putting on his snow-shoes. Minna was ready in a moment. They rushed off to the Swedish Castle, leaving the two old men to follow.

'Do you hear that cracking?' said Wilfrid.

'The ice is moving in the fiord,' said Minna; 'the spring will soon be here.'

Wilfrid said no more. When they were in the courtyard, they both felt that they had no right, no strength, to enter the house.

'What do you think of her?' asked Wilfrid.

'What a blaze of light!' cried Minna, standing in front of the drawing-room window. 'There he is—great God! and how beautiful! Oh, my Seraphitus, take me to thee!'

The girl's outcry was inward and inaudible. She saw Seraphitus standing lightly shrouded in an opal-tinted mist, which was diffused for a short distance all about the apparently phosphorescent body.

'How lovely she is!' was Wilfrid's mental exclamation.

Pastor Becker now came up with David; he saw his daughter and the stranger in front of the window, came close to them, looked into the room, and said—

'Well, David, she is saying her prayers.'

'But try to go in, sir.'

'Why disturb her when she is praying?' replied the pastor.

At this moment a ray of moonlight from beyond the Falberg fell on the window. They all looked round, startled by this natural phenomenon; but when they turned again to look at Seraphita, she had vanished.

'That is strange!' said Wilfrid in surprise.

'But I hear exquisite strains,' said Minna.

'Well, what next?' said the pastor; 'she is going to bed, no doubt.'

David had gone in. They walked home in silence; all three interpreted this vision in a different sense. Pastor Becker felt doubt; Minna felt adoration; Wilfrid, desire.

Wilfrid was a man of six-and-thirty. Though built

on a large scale, he was not ill proportioned. He was of a middle height, like most men who are superior to the common herd; his chest and shoulders were broad, and his neck was short, as in men whose heart is near their head; he had thick, fine black hair, and his eyes, of a tawny brown, had a sunny sparkle in them that showed how eagerly his nature absorbed light. If his strong and irregular features were lacking in that internal calm which is given by a life free from storms, they revealed the inexhaustible forces of ardent senses and instinctive appetites; just as his movements showed the perfection of physical structure, adaptability of nature, and responsive action. This man might hold his own with the savage; might hear, as he does, the footfall of the enemy in the depths of the forest, scent his trail in the air, and see a friendly signal on the remote horizon. His sleep was light, like that of creatures alert against surprise. His frame quickly adapted itself to the climate of any country whither his stormy life might lead him. Art and Science alike would have admired this organisation as a sort of human model; everything was truly balanced, heart and movement, intelligence and will.

At first sight he might seem to be classed with those purely instinctive beings who abandon themselves wholly to material needs; but, early in life, he had made his way in the social world to which his feelings had committed him; reading had raised his intelligence, meditation had improved his mind, science had expanded his understanding. He had studied the laws of humanity, and the play of interests moved to action by the passions, and he seemed to have been long familiar with the abstract notions on which society is founded. He had grown pale over books, which are human actions in death; he had kept late hours in the midst of festivities in many a European capital; he had waked up in many strange beds; he had slept perhaps on a battlefield on

the night before the fight, and the night after a victory; his tempestuous youth might have tossed him on to the deck of a pirate ship in the most dissimilar quarters of the globe; thus he was experienced in living human action. So he knew the present and the past; both chapters of history—that of the elder and that of the present time.

Many men have been, like Wilfrid, equally strong of hand, heart, and brain; and, like him, they have generally misused this threefold power.

But though this man's outward husk was still akin to the scum of humanity, he certainly belonged no less to the sphere where force is intelligent. Notwithstanding the wrappers in which his soul was shrouded, there were in him those indescribable symptoms visible to the eye of the pure-hearted, of children whose innocence has never felt the blighting breath of evil passions, of old men who have triumphed over theirs; and these signs revealed a Cain to whom hope yet remained, and who seemed to be seeking absolution at the ends of the earth. Minna suspected the slave of glory in this man; Seraphita recognised it; both admired and pitied him. Whence had they this intuition? Nothing can be simpler or, at the same time, more extraordinary. As soon as man desires to penetrate the secrets of nature, where there is no real secret, all that is needed is sight; he can see that the marvellous is the outcome of the simple.

'Seraphitus,' said Minna, one evening a few days after Wilfrid's arrival at Jarvis, 'you read this stranger's soul, while I have only a vague impression of him. He freezes or he warms me; but you seem to know the reason of this frost and this heat; you can tell me, for you know all about him.'

'Yes, I have seen the causes,' said Seraphitus, his heavy eyelids closing over his eyes.

'By what power?' asked the inquisitive Minna.

'I have the gift of specialism,' he replied. 'Specialism constitutes a sort of inward vision which penetrates all things, and you can understand its processes only by a comparison. In the great cities of Europe, where works of art are produced by which the human hand endeavours to represent the effects of moral nature as well as those of physical nature, there are some sublime geniuses who express their ideas in marble. The sculptor works on the marble; he shapes it, and puts into it a world of thought. There are such marbles to which the hand of man has given the power of representing a wholly sublime or a wholly evil aspect of humanity; most beholders see in these a human figure and nothing more; others, a little higher in the scale of human beings, discern some part of the thoughts rendered by the sculptor, and admire the form; but those who are initiated into the secrets of Art are in sympathy with the sculptor; when they see his work they recognise in it the whole world of his thoughts. These are the princes of Art; they bear in themselves a mirror in which nature is reflected with all its most trifling details.

'Well, in me there is a mirror in which moral nature is reflected with all its causes and effects. I can read the past and the future by thus looking into the conscience. You still ask me how? Suppose the marble to be a man's body, and the sculptor to be feeling passion, vice, or crime, virtue, error, or repentance; then you will understand how I could read the stranger's soul, though you will not understand specialism; to imagine what that gift is you must possess it.'

Though Wilfrid was akin to both the primitive and widely different types of men—men of might and men of mind—his excesses, his stormy life, and his sins had often shown him the way of faith; for doubt has two sides—the side of light and the side of darkness. Wilfrid had too thoroughly squeezed the world in both its

aspects—matter and spirit—not to have felt the thirst of the unknown, the longing for the Beyond which comes to most men who have knowledge, power, and will. But neither his knowledge, nor his actions, nor his will had due guidance. He had escaped from social life from necessity, as a criminal flies to the cloister. Remorse, the virtue of the weak, could not touch him. Remorse is impotence; it will sin again. Only repentance is strong; it can end everything. But Wilfrid, in travelling through the world, which he had made his sanctuary, nowhere found balm for his wounds; nowhere had he found a nature to which he could attach himself. Despair had dried up in him the wellspring of desire. His was one of those spirits which, having come to a conflict with passion, have proved themselves the stronger, and so have nothing left to clutch in their talons; spirits which, the opportunity failing them for putting themselves at the head of their peers to trample a whole people under their horse's hoofs, would pay the price of a dreadful martyrdom for the gift of a faith to be wrecked upon; like lofty rocks waiting for the touch of a staff which never comes, to enable them to shed springs of running water.

Tossed among the snows of Norway by one of the purposes of his restless and inquiring life, the winter had taken him by surprise at Jarvis. On the day when he first saw Seraphita, the meeting wiped out all memories of his past life. This girl gave him such intense agitation as he had fancied was dead for ever. The ashes burst into flame again, and were blown away by the first breath of that voice. Who has known what it is to become young and pure again after growing cold with age and foul with impurities? Wilfrid loved suddenly, as he had never loved; he loved in secret, with faith and awe and hidden frenzies. His life was disturbed to its very source at the mere thought of seeing Seraphita. When he heard her speak, he was borne away to unknown

worlds; he was dumb in her presence—she bewitched him.

Here, under the snows, amid the ice-fields, this heavenly flower had blossomed on the stem—the flower to which his hopes went up, till now deceived, whose mere presence gave rise to the new aspirations, the ideas, the feelings, that crowd around us to lift us up to higher realms, as angels transport the elect to heaven in the symbolical pictures suggested to painters by some familiar spirit. Celestial odours softened the granite of this rock, light endowed with language poured forth the divine melodies which escort the pilgrim on his way to heaven. Having drained the cup of earthly love and crushed it with his teeth, he now saw the cup of election, sparkling with limpid waters, the chalice that gives a thirst for unfading joys to all who approach it with lips of faith so ardent that the crystal does not break at their touch. He had met with the walls of brass he had been seeking throughout the world that he might climb them.

He flew to Seraphita, intending to express to her the vehemence of a passion under which he was plunging, like the horse in the story under the bronze rider whom nothing can move, who sits firm, and whose weight grows greater as the fiery steed tries to throw him. He went to tell her his life, to display the greatness of his soul by the greatness of his sins, to show her the ruins in his desert. But as soon as he had entered the precincts, and found himself in the vast domain surveyed by those eyes whose heavenly blue knew no limits in the present or in the past, he became as calm and submissive as a lion when, rushing on his prey in the African plain, he scents a love message on the wings of the breeze, and stands still. A gulf opened before him in which the words of his delirium were lost, and whence a voice came up that transformed him: he was a boy again, a boy of sixteen, shy and bashful before this

maiden of the tranquil brow, this white creature whose immovable calm was like the stern impassibility of human justice. And the struggle had never ceased till this evening when, with a single look, she had at length stricken him down like a hawk, which, after describing bewildering spirals round its prey, makes it drop stunned before carrying it off to its eyrie.

We have long struggles with ourself, of which the outcome is one of our actions; they are, as it were, the inner side of human nature. This inner side is God's; the outer side belongs to men.

More than once had Seraphita chosen to show Wilfrid that she knew that motley inner part which forms the second life of most men. She had often said to him, in her dove-like tone, when Wilfrid had vowed on the way up that he would carry her off to be his own possession, 'Why so much vehemence?' Wilfrid, when alone, was strong enough to utter the cry of rebellion he had given vent to at Pastor Becker's, to be soothed by the old man's narrative. This man—a mocker, a scorner—at last saw the light of a starlike belief rising in his darkness; he wondered whether Seraphita were not an exile from the upper spheres on her homeward road. He did not offer this Norwegian lily the homage of such idealisation as lovers of every land are apt to squander; he really believed in her divinity.

Why was she buried in the depths of this fiord? What was she doing there? Unanswerable questions crowded on his mind. What could happen between him and her? What fate had led him hither?

To him Seraphita was the motionless statue, as light as a shade, that Minna had just seen standing on the brink of the abyss. Seraphita could thus confront every abyss, and nothing could hurt her; the line of her brow would be unmoved, the light in her eye would never tremble. His love, then, was without hope, but not without curiosity.

From the first moment when Wilfrid suspected the ethereal nature in this sorceress, who had told him the secret of his life in harmonious dreams, he resolved to try to subjugate her, to keep her, to steal her from heaven, where perhaps they awaited her. He would be the representative of humanity, of this earth, recapturing their prey. His pride, the only sentiment which can uplift a man for any length of time, would make him rejoice in that triumph for the rest of his life. At the mere thought his blood boiled in his veins, his heart swelled. If he could not succeed, he would crush her. It is so natural to destroy what you cannot get possession of, to deny what you do not understand, to insult what you covet.

Next day Wilfrid, full of the ideas to which the extraordinary spectacle he had witnessed had naturally given rise, wanted to cross-question David, and came to see him, making a pretext of his wish for news of Seraphita. Though Pastor Becker thought the poor old man was childish, the stranger trusted to his own perspicacity to guide him in discovering the grains of truth the old serving-man might drop in the torrent of his wandering talk.

David had the rigid but undecided expression of a man of eighty; under his white hair his brow showed deep wrinkles, forming broken stratifications, and his whole face was furrowed like the dry bed of a torrent. All his vitality seemed to be concentrated in his eyes, where a spark still gleamed; but that light even was hidden behind clouds, and might be either the fitful activity of a feeble mind, or the stupid glare of intoxication. His slow, heavy movements betrayed the chill of old age, and seemed to communicate it to any one who gazed at him for long, for he had the strength of inertia. His narrow intelligence awoke only at the sound of his mistress's voice, at the sight or the thought of her. She was the soul of this merely material wreck. When David was

alone you would have thought him a corpse; if Seraphita appeared, or spoke, or was spoken of, the dead rose from the grave and recovered motion and speech.

Never were the dry bones that the breath of God shall revive in the valley of Jehoshaphat—never was that Apocalyptic parable more vividly realised than in this Lazarus perennially called forth from the sepulchre by the voice of this young girl. His mode of speech, always highly figurative, and often incomprehensible, kept the villagers from talking to him; but they greatly respected a mind so far removed from the vulgar routine; it commands the instinctive reverence of common folk.

Wilfrid found David in the outer room apparently asleep, close to the stove. Like a dog recognising a friend's approach, the old man opened his eyes, saw the stranger, and did not stir.

'Well, where is she?' asked Wilfrid, sitting down by the old man.

David fluttered his fingers in the air to represent the flight of a bird.

'She is not still in pain?' asked Wilfrid.

'None but those beings who are plighted to heaven can suffer without any diminution of their love; that is the seal of true faith,' said the old man gravely, like an instrument responding to a chance touch.

'Who tells you to say that?'

'The spirit.'

'What happened, after all, last evening? Did you force your way past the Vertumni on guard? Did you steal in between the Mammons?'

'Yes,' replied David, waking as if from a dream.

The mist before his eye cleared off under a flash that came from within, and which made it grow gradually as bright as an eagle's, as intelligent as a poet's.

'What then did you see?' asked Wilfrid, amazed at this sudden change.

'I saw Species and Shapes, I heard the Spirit of All

Things; I saw the rebellion of the Wicked, I listened to the words of the Good. Seven devils appeared, seven archangels came down to them. The archangels stood afar, they were veiled, and looked on. The devils were close at hand, they glittered and moved. Mammon was there in a shell of pearl, in the guise of a beautiful naked woman; his body was as dazzling as the snow, no human form can be so perfect; and he said, "I am all pleasure, and thou shalt possess me!"—Lucifer, the Prince of Serpents, came in his royal attire; he was as a man, as beautiful as an angel, and he said, "The human race shall serve thee!"—The Queen of the Covetous, she who never restores that which she has taken—the Sea herself appeared in her mantle of green; she opened her bosom and showed her store of gems, she vomited treasures and offered them as a gift; she tossed up waves of sapphire and emerald; her creatures were disturbed, they came forth from their hiding-places and spoke; the fairest of the pearls spread butterflies' wings, she glistened, and spoke in sea-melodies, saying, "We are both daughters of suffering, we are sisters; wait for me; we will fly together; I have only to be changed into a woman." The bird that has the talons of an eagle and the legs of a lion, the head of a woman and a horse's quarters—the Animal—crouched before her and licked her feet, and promised seven hundred years of plenty to this well-beloved daughter.

'The most formidable of all, the Child, came to her very knee, weeping, and saying, "Can you forsake me, so feeble and helpless? Mother, stay with me!" He played with the others, he shed idleness in the air; heaven itself might have yielded to his lament. The Virgin of pure song brought music that debauches the soul. The Kings of the East passed by with their slaves, their armies, and their women; the Wounded clamoured for help, the Wretched held out their hands: "Do not leave us, do not leave us!" was their cry.

'I too cried, "Do not leave us; we will worship you—only stay!"

'Flowers burst from their seeds, and wrapped her in perfume, which said, "Stay!" The Giant Anakim came down from Jupiter, bringing Gold and his comrades, and all the Spirits of the astral worlds who had followed him, and they all said, "We will be thine for seven hundred years." At last Death got off his pale horse and said, "I will obey thee!" And they all fell on their faces at her feet; if you could but have seen them! They filled a vast plain, and all cried to her, "We have fed thee; thou art our child; do not forsake us!"

'Life came up from the red waters and said, "I will not desert thee!" Then, finding Seraphita speechless, she suddenly blazed like the sun, and exclaimed, "I am the Light!"—"The light is there!" replied Seraphita, pointing to clouds where the archangels were astir. But she was worn out; Desire had broken her on the rack; she could only cry aloud, "My God!"

'How many Angelic Spirits who have climbed the hill, and are on the point of reaching the summit, have stumbled on a stone that has made them fall and roll back into the depths!—All these fallen Spirits marvelled at her constancy; they stood there a motionless chorus, weeping, and saying, "Courage!" At last she had triumphed over Desire, unchained to rend her in every Shape and Species. She remained praying; and when she raised her eyes, she saw the feet of the angels flying back to heaven.'

'She saw the feet of the angels?' repeated Wilfrid.

'Yes,' said the old man.

'This was a dream that she told you?' asked Wilfrid.

'A dream as real as that you are alive,' replied David. 'I was there.'

The old servant's calm conviction struck Wilfrid, who went away, wondering whether these visions were at all

less extraordinary than those of which Swedenborg wrote, and of which he had read the evening before.

'If spirits exist, they must surely act,' said he to himself as he went into the manse, where he found the pastor alone.

'My dear Pastor,' said he, 'Seraphita is human only in form, and her form is unaccountable. Do not regard me as mad or in love: conviction cannot be argued away. Convert my belief into a scientific hypothesis, and let us try to understand all this. To-morrow we will go to see her together.'

'And then?' said the minister.

'If her eye knows no limitation of space, if her thought is the sight of the intellect, allowing her to apprehend the essence of things and to connect them with the general evolution of the universe; if, in a word, she knows and sees everything, let us get the Pythoness on to her tripod, and compel the eagle to spread its wings, by threats. Help me! I breathe a consuming fire; I must extinguish it, or be devoured by it. In short, I see my prey; I will have it.'

'It will be a conquest difficult of achievement,' said the minister, 'for the poor girl is——'

'Is?'—— said Wilfrid.'

'Mad,' said the pastor.

'I will not dispute her madness,' said Wilfrid, 'so long as you do not dispute her superiority. Dear Pastor Becker, she has often put me to the blush by her learning. Has she travelled much?'

'From her house to the fiord.'

'She has never been away!' cried Wilfrid. 'Then she must have read a great deal?'

'Not a page, not a jot. I am the only person in Jarvis who has any books. Swedenborg's writings, the only works in the hamlet, are here; she has never borrowed a single volume.'

'Have you ever tried to converse with her?'

'Of what use would it be?'

'No one has dwelt under her roof?'

'She has no friends but you and Minna; no servant but old David.'

'And she has never learned anything of Science or Art?'

'From whom?' said the pastor.

'Then, when she discusses such matters very pertinently, as she has often done with me, what would you infer?'

'That the girl may, perhaps, during all these years of silence, have acquired such faculties as were possessed by Apollonius of Tyana, and by certain so-called wizards, who were burned by the Inquisition, which rejected the idea of second sight.'

'When she talks Arabic, what can you say?'

'The history of medicine contains many accredited instances of women who spoke languages they did not understand.'

'What can I do?' said Wilfrid. 'She knows things concerning my past life of which the secret lay in me.'

'We will see if she can tell me any thoughts that I have never spoken to any one,' said Pastor Becker.

Minna came into the room.

'Well, my child, and how is your Spirit-friend?'

'He is suffering, father,' said she, bowing to Wilfrid. 'The passions of humanity, tricked out in their false splendour, tortured him in the night, and spread incredible pomp before his eyes.—But you treat all these things as mere fables.'

'Fables as delightful to him who reads them in his brain as those of the *Arabian Nights* are to ordinary minds,' said her father, smiling.

'Then, did not Satan,' she retorted, 'transport the Saviour to the summit of the Temple and show Him the kingdoms at His feet?'

'The Evangelists,' replied Becker, 'did not so effectually correct their text but that several versions exist.'

'You, then, believe in the reality of these apparitions?' Wilfrid asked of Minna.

'Who can doubt that hears him tell of them?'

'Him?—Who?' asked Wilfrid.

'He who dwells there,' said Minna, pointing to the castle.

'You speak of Seraphita?' said Wilfrid, surprised.

The girl hung her head, with a gentle but mischievous glance at him.

'Yes, you too take pleasure in confusing my mind.—Who is she? What is your idea of her?'

'What I feel is inexplicable,' said Minna, colouring.

'You are both mad!' said the pastor.

'Then we meet to-morrow,' said Wilfrid, as he left.

IV

THE CLOUDS OF THE SANCTUARY

THERE are spectacles to which all the material magnificence at man's command is made to contribute. Whole tribes of slaves or divers go forth to seek in the sands of the sea, in the bowels of the rocks, the pearls and diamonds that adorn the spectators. These treasures, handed down from heir to heir, have blazed on crowned heads, and might be the most veracious historians of humanity if they could but speak. Have they not seen the joys and woes of the greatest as well as of the humblest? They have been everywhere—worn with pride at high festivals; carried in despair to the money-lender; stolen amid blood and pillage; treasured in miracles of artistic workmanship contrived for their safe keeping. Excepting Cleopatra's pearl, not one has perished.

The great and the rich are assembled to see a king crowned—a monarch whose raiment is the work of

men's hands, but who, in all his glory, is arrayed in purple less exquisite than that of a humble flower. These festivities, blazing with light, bathed in music through which the words of men strive to be heard in thunder,—all these works of man can be crushed by a thought, a feeling. The mind of man can bring to his ken light more glorious, can make him hear more tuneful harmonies, show him among clouds the glittering constellations he may question ; and the heart can do yet more ! Man may stand face to face with a single being and find in a single word, a single look, a burthen so heavy to be borne, a light so intense, a sound so piercing, that he can but yield and kneel. The truest splendours are not in outward things, but in ourselves.

To a learned man, is not some secret of science a whole new world of wonders ? But do the clarions of force, the gems of wealth, the music of triumph, the concourse of the crowd, do honour to his joy ? No. He goes off to some remote nook, where a man, often pale and feeble, whispers a single word in his ear. That word, like a torch in an underground passage, lights up the whole of science.

Every human conception, arrayed in the most attractive forms that mystery can invent, once gathered round a blind man sitting in the mud by a roadside. The three worlds—the Natural, Spiritual, and Divine—were revealed to an unhappy Florentine exile ; as he went he was escorted by the happy and by the suffering, by those who prayed and those who cursed, by angels and by the damned. When He who came from God, who knew and could do all things, appeared to three of His disciples, it was one evening at the common table of a poor little inn ; there and then the Light broke forth, bursting material husks, and showing its spiritual power. They saw Him in His glory, and the earth clung to their feet no more than as the sandals they could slip off them.

The pastor, Wilfrid, and Minna were all three excited to alarm at going to the house of the extraordinary being they proposed to question. To each of them the Swedish castle was magnified into the scene of a stupendous spectacle, like those of which the composition and colour are so skilfully arranged by poets, where the actors, though imaginary to men, are real to those who are beginning to enter into the spiritual world. On the seats of that amphitheatre the pastor beheld arrayed the dark legions of doubt, his gloomy ideas, his vicious syllogisms in argument; he called up the various philosophical and religious sects, ever contentious, and all embodied in the shape of a fleshless system, as lean as the figure of Time as imagined by man—the old mower who with one hand raises the scythe, and in the other carries a meagre world, the world of human life.

Wilfrid saw there his first illusions and his last hopes; he imagined human destiny incarnate there and all its struggles; religion and its triumphant hierarchies.

Minna vaguely found heaven there, seen through a vista; love held up a curtain embroidered with mystical figures, and the harmonious sounds that fell on her ears increased her curiosity. Hence this evening was to them what the supper at Emmaus was to the three travellers, what a vision was to Dante, what an inspiration was to Homer; to them, too, the three aspects of the world were to be revealed, veils rent, doubts dispelled, darkness lightened. Human nature in all its phases, and awaiting illumination, could find no better representatives than this young girl, this man, and these two elders, one of them learned enough to be sceptical, the other ignorant enough to believe. No scene could be simpler in appearance or more stupendous in fact.

On entering, shown in by old David, they found Seraphita standing by the table, on which were spread the various items constituting a Tea, a meal which takes

the place in the north of the pleasures of wine-drinking, reserved for southern lands. Nothing certainly betrayed in her—or in him—a wondrous being who had the power of appearing under two distinct forms, nothing that showed the various forces she could command. With a homely desire to make her three guests comfortable, Seraphita bid David to feed the stove with wood.

'Good evening, neighbours,' said she. 'Dear Pastor Becker, you did well to come; you see me alive, perhaps, for the last time. This winter has killed me.—Be seated, pray,' she added to Wilfrid.—'And you, Minna, sit there,' and she pointed to an armchair near the young man. 'You have brought your work, I see. Did you find out the stitch. The pattern is very pretty. For whom is it to be? For your father or for this gentleman?' and she turned to Wilfrid. 'We must not allow him to leave without some remembrance of the damsels of Norway.'

'Then you were in pain again yesterday?' asked Wilfrid.

'That is nothing,' she replied. 'Such pain makes me glad; it is indispensable to escape from life.'

'Then you are not afraid of dying?' said the minister, smiling, for he did not believe in her illness.

'No, dear Pastor; there are two ways of dying—to some death means victory, to some it is defeat.'

'And you think you have won?' said Minna.

'I do not know,' said she. 'Perhaps it is only a step more.'

The milky radiance of her brow seemed to fade, her eyes fell under her lids, which slowly closed. This simple circumstance distressed the three inquirers, who sat quite still. The pastor was the boldest.

'My dear girl,' said he, 'you are candour itself; you are also divinely kind. I want more of you this evening than the dainties of your tea-table. If we may believe what some people say, you know some most wonderful

things; and if so, would it not be an act of charity to clear up some of our doubts?'

'Oh yes!' said Seraphita, with a smile. 'They say that I walk on the clouds; I am on familiar terms with the eddies in the fiord; the sea is a horse I have saddled and bridled; I know where the singing flower grows, where the talking light shines, where living colours blaze that scent the air; I have Solomon's ring; I am a fairy; I give my orders to the wind, and it obeys me like a submissive slave; I can see the treasures in the mine; I am the virgin whom pearls rush to meet, and——'

'And we walk unharmed on the Falberg,' Minna put in.

'What, you too?' replied the Being with a luminous glance at the girl, which quite upset her. 'If I had not the power of reading through your brows the wish that has brought you here, should I be what you think I am?' she went on, including them all in her captivating gaze, to David's great satisfaction, and he went off rubbing his hands.—'Yes,' she went on after a pause, 'you all came overflowing with childish curiosity. You, my dear Pastor, wondered whether it were possible that a girl of seventeen should know even one of the thousand secrets which learned men seek diligently with their noses to the ground instead of with their eyes raised to heaven! Now, if I were to show you how and where plant life and animal life mingle, you would begin to doubt your doubts.—You plotted to cross-question me, confess?'

'Yes, beloved Seraphita,' said Wilfrid. 'But is not such a desire natural to man?'

'And do you want to worry this child?' she said, laying her hand on Minna's hair with a caressing gesture.

The girl looked up, and seemed to long to be merged in the Being before her.

'The word is given for all,' the mysterious Being

went on very gravely. 'Woe to him who should keep silence even in the midst of the desert, thinking that none would hear. Everything speaks, everything hears here below. The word moves worlds.—I hope, Pastor Becker, not to speak in vain. I know what difficulties trouble you most: would it not be a miracle if I could at once apprehend all the past experiences of your conscience? Well, that miracle will be accomplished.—Listen to me: you have never confessed your doubts in their full extent; I alone, immovable in my faith, can set them before you, and frighten you at your own image. You are on the darkest declivity of doubt. You do not believe in God, and everything on earth is of secondary importance to the man who attacks the first cause of everything.

'Let us set aside the discussions thrashed out without result by false philosophers. Generations of Spiritualists have made no less vain efforts to disprove the existence of matter than generations of Materialists have made to disprove the existence of the spirit. Why these contests? Does not man, as he is, afford undeniable proofs of both? Is he not an union of matter and spirit? Only a madman can refuse to find an atom of matter in the human frame; when it is decomposed, natural science finds no difference between its elements and those of other animals. The idea which is produced in man by the power of comparing several different objects, on the other hand, does not seem to come within the domain of matter. On this I give no opinion; we have to deal with your doubts, not with my convictions.

'But to you, as to most thoughtful men, the relations which you have the faculty of discerning between things, of which the real existence is made certain to you through your senses, do not, I suppose, seem *material.* The natural Universe, then, of things and beings meets in man with the supernatural Universe of likeness or difference which he can discern between the innumerable

forms in nature—relations so various that they seem to be infinite; for if, till the present day, no one has been able to enumerate the created things of this earth only, what man can ever enumerate their relations to each other? Is not the small fraction with which you are familiar, in regard to the grand total, as an unit to the infinite?

'Hence here you find yourself already made aware of the existence of the infinite, and this necessarily leads you to conceive of a purely spiritual sphere. Hence, too, man is in himself sufficient evidence of these two modes of life: Matter and Spirit. In him ends a finite, visible universe; in him begins an infinite and invisible universe—two worlds that do not know each other. Have the pebbles of the fiord any cognisance of their relative shapes, are they conscious of the colours seen in them by the eye of man, do they hear the music of the ripples that dance over them? Let us then leap the gulf we cannot fathom, the unthinkable union of a material with a spiritual universe, the concept of a visible, ponderable, tangible creation, conterminous with an invisible, imponderable, intangible creation; absolutely dissimilar, separated by a void, united by indisputable points of contact, and meeting in a being who belongs to both! Let us, I say, mingle in one world these two worlds, which, in your philosophy, can never coalesce, and which, in fact, do coalesce.

'However abstract man may call it, the relation which binds two things together must stamp its mark. Where? On what? We have not now to inquire to what degree of rarity matter may be reduced. If that were indeed the question, I do not see why He who has linked the stars together at immeasurable distances by physical laws, to veil His face withal, should not have created substances that could think, nor why you will not allow that He should have given thought a body.

'To you, then, your invisible, moral, or mental universe,

and your visible, physical universe, constitute one and the same matter. We will not divide bodies from their properties, nor objects from their relations. Everything that exists, that weighs upon and overwhelms us from above and beneath us, before us or within us; all that our eyes or our minds apprehend, all that is named or nameless, must, to reduce the problem of Creation to the standard of your logic, be a finite mass of matter; if it were infinite, God could not be its master. Thus, according to you, dear Pastor, by whatever scheme you propose to introduce God, who is infinite, into this finite mass of matter, God could no longer exist with such attributes as are ascribed to Him by man. If we seek Him through facts, He is not; if we seek Him through reason, still He is not; both spiritually and materially God is impossible. Let us hearken to the word of human reason driven to its utmost consequences.

'If we now conceive of God face to face with this stupendous whole, we find only two conditions of relationship possible: Either God and Matter were contemporaneous, or God was alone and pre-existent. If all the wisdom that has enlightened the human race from the first day of its existence could be collected in one vast brain, that monstrous brain could invent no third mode of being, short of denying both God and Matter. Human philosophers may pile up mountains of words and ideas, Religions may accumulate emblems and beliefs, revelations and mysteries, still we are forced on to this terrible dilemma, and must choose one of the two propositions it offers. However, you have not much choice, for each leads the human mind to scepticism.

'The problem being thus stated, what signifies Spirit or Matter? What does it signify which way the worlds are moving if once the Being who guides them is proved to be absurd? Of what use is it to inquire whether man is advancing towards heaven or coming back from it, whether Creation is tending upwards towards the spirit,

or downwards towards matter, if the worlds we question can give no answer? Of what consequence are theogonies and their armies, theologies and their dogmas, when, whichever alternative man chooses in answer to the problem, his God is no more?

'Let us examine the first: Suppose God and matter to have been co-existent from the beginning. Can He be God who suffers the action and co-existence of a substance that is not Himself? On this theory God is but a secondary agent constrained to organise matter. Who constrained Him? And as between that coarser other half and Him, who was to decide? Who paid the Great Workman for the six days' labour attributed to Him? If there were, indeed, some coercing force which was neither God nor matter, if God were compelled to make the machinery of the universe, it would be no less absurd to call Him God than to call a slave set to turn a mill a Roman citizen. And, in fact, the difficulty is just as insoluble in the case of that Supreme Intelligence as in that of God Himself. It only carries the problem a step further back; and is not this like the Indian philosophers, who place the world on a tortoise, and the tortoise on an elephant, but cannot say on what their elephant's feet rest? Can we conceive that this Supreme Will, evolved from the conflict of God with matter—this God greater than God—should have existed during eternity without Willing what He Willed, granting that eternity can be divided into two periods? Wherever God may be, if He knew not what His future Will would be, what becomes of His intuitive perceptions? And of these two eternities, which is the superior—uncreated eternity or created eternity?

'If God from all eternity willed that the world should be what it is, this fresh view of necessity, which is in harmony no doubt with the notion of a Sovereign Intelligence, implies the co-eternity of matter. Whether matter be co-eternal by the Divine Will, which must

at all times be at one with itself, or whether it be independently co-eternal, since the power of God must be absolute, it perishes if He has not His free-will. He would always have found within Himself a supreme reason which would have ruled Him. Is God God if He cannot separate Himself from the works of His creation in subsequent as well as in anterior eternity?

'This aspect of the problem is then insoluble so far as cause is concerned. Let us examine it in its effects.

'If God the Creator, under compulsion to create the universe from all eternity, is inconceivable, He is no less so as perpetually one with His work. God, eternally constrained to exist in His creatures, is no less dishonoured than in His former position as a workman. Can you conceive of a God who can no more be independent of His work than dependent on it? Can He destroy it without treason to Himself? Consider and make your choice: Whether He should some day destroy it, or not destroy it; either alternative is equally fatal to attributes, without which He cannot subsist. Is the world a mere experiment, a perishable mould which must be destroyed? Then God must be inconsistent and impotent. Inconsistent—for ought He not to have known the issue before making the experiment, and why does He delay destroying that which is to be destroyed? Impotent—or how else could He have created an imperfect world?

'And if an imperfect creation belies the faculties that man ascribes to God, let us, on the other hand, suppose it to be perfect. This idea is in harmony with our conception of a God of supreme intelligence who could make no mistake; but, then, why any deterioration? Why Regeneration? Then a perfect world is necessarily indestructible, its forms must be imperishable; it can neither advance nor retrocede; it rolls on in an eternal orbit whence it can never deviate. Thus is God dependent on His work; thus is it co-eternal with Him, which brings us back to one of the propositions which

most audaciously attacks God. If the universe is imperfect, it allows of advance and progress; if perfect, it is stationary. If it is impossible to conceive of a progressive God, not knowing from all eternity what the result would be of His creation, can we then admit a stationary God? Would not that be the apotheosis of matter, the greatest possible negation? Under the first hypothesis, God deceases by want of power; under the second, He deceases by the force of inertia.

'Hence, alike in the conception and the execution of creation, to every honest mind the notion of matter as contemporaneous with God is a denial of God.

'Compelled to choose between these two aspects of the question, in order to govern the nations, many generations of great thinkers have chosen the second. This gave rise to the dogma of two moral elements, as conceived of by the Magians, which has spread in Europe under the image of Satan contending with the Father of all. But are not this dogmatic formula and the endless deifications that are derived from it crimes of high treason to the divine Majesty? By what other name can we call a belief that makes the personification of Evil the rival of God, for ever struggling in the throes of a supreme intellect without any hope of victory? The laws of statics show that two forces thus placed must neutralise each other.

'Now, turn to the other side of the problem: God was pre-existent and alone.

'We need not reproduce the former arguments, which are equally strong in relation to the division of eternity into two periods—uncreated and created. We will also set aside the question of the motion or the immobility of worlds, and restrict ourselves to the inherent difficulties of this second thesis.

'If God pre-existed alone, the universe proceeded from Him; matter is the emanation of His essence. Then matter is not. Every form is but a veil hiding

the Divine Spirit. Then, the world is eternal; then, the world is God! But is not this formula even more fatal than the former one to the attributes assigned to God by human reason? Does matter, as emanating from God, and always one with Him, account for the existing conditions of matter? How are we to believe that the Almighty, supremely good in His nature and His acts, could beget things so unlike Himself that He is not in all things and everywhere the same? Were there in Him certain evil constituents which He rejected from Him?—A conjecture more terrible than offensive or ridiculous, inasmuch as it includes the two theorems which, in our former argument, we proved to be inadmissible. God must be One, and cannot divide Himself without infringing the most important of His attributes. Is it possible to conceive of a portion of God which is not God?

'This hypothesis seemed so impious to the Roman Church, that she made God's Omnipresence, even in the smallest fragments of the Eucharist, an article of Faith.

'How, then, are we to conceive of an Omnipotent Intelligence which yet cannot conquer? How unite it with Nature, unless by direct conquest? But Nature seeks and combines, reproduces, dies, and is born again; it is even more agitated in the creative effort than when all is in a state of fusion; it suffers and groans; it is ignorant, degenerate, does evil, makes mistakes, destroys itself, disappears, and begins again. How are we to justify the almost universal eclipse of the Divine element? Why is death? Why was the spirit of evil, the monarch of this earth, sent forth from a supremely good God—good alike in His essence and His faculties, who could have produced nothing that was not like Himself?

'And if, setting aside this relentless issue which leads us at once to the absurd, we go into details, what purpose can we ascribe to the world? If all is God, all is

at once effect and cause; or, more accurately, cause and effect do not exist. Like God, all is one; and you can discern no starting-point and no end. Can the real end be, possibly, a rotation of matter growing more and more rare? But whatever the end may be, is not the mechanism of such matter proceeding from God and returning to God, a mere child's plaything? Why should He embody Himself so grossly? Under what form is God most completely God? Which wins the day, spirit or matter, when neither of those modes of being can be wrong? Who can possibly discern God in this perennial toil by which He divides Himself into two natures—one omniscient, the other knowing nothing? Can you conceive of God as playing at being man, laughing His own labours to scorn, dying on Friday to rise again on Sunday, and carrying on the farce from age to age while knowing the end from all eternity; and never telling Himself, the Creature, what He is doing as Creator?

'The God of the former hypothesis, null as He is by sheer inertia, seems more possible—if we had to choose between impossibilities—than that stupid mocking God who destroys Himself when two portions of humanity meet weapon in hand. Comical as this ultimate expression of the second aspect of the problem may be, it was that chosen by half the human race among nations that had created certain gay mythologies. These amorous nations were consistent; to them everything was a god, even fear and its cowardice, even crime and its bacchanals. If we accept Pantheism, the faith of some great human geniuses, who can tell where reason lies? Is it with the savage running free in the desert, clothed in his nakedness, lordly and always right in his actions whatever they may be, listening to the sun and talking to the sea? Is it with the civilised man, whose greatest pleasures are due to falsehoods, who hews and hammers Nature to make the gun he carries on his shoulder, who has applied his

intelligence to hasten the hour of his death, and create maladies that taint his pleasures? When the scourge of pestilence, or the ploughshare of war, or the genius of the desert had passed over a spot of earth, annihilating everything, which came off best—the Nubian savage or the patrician of Thebes?

'Your scepticism permeates from above downwards. Your doubts include everything, the end as well as the means. If the physical world seems inexplicable, the moral world proves even more against God. Where, then, is progress? If everything goes on improving, why do we die as children? Why do not nations, at any rate, perpetuate themselves? Is the world that proceeded from God, that is contained in God, stationary? Do we live but once? Or do we live for ever? If we live but once, coerced by the advance of the Great All, of which we have no knowledge given us, let us do what we will! If we are eternal, let everything pass! Can the creature be guilty because it exists when changes are going on? If it sins at the moment of some great transformation, shall it be punished for it after having been the victim? What becomes of divine goodness if it refuses to place us at once in the realms of happiness—if such there be? What becomes of God's foreknowledge if He does not know the results of the trials to which He subjects us? What is this alternative proposed to man by all his creeds, between stewing in an eternal cauldron and wandering in a white robe with a palm in his hand and a halo to crown him? Can this pagan invention be the supreme promise of God?

'And what magnanimous spirit but sees how unworthy of man and God alike is virtue out of self-interest, the eternity of joys offered by every creed to those who, during a few brief hours of existence, fulfil certain monstrous and often unnatural conditions? Is it not preposterous to endow man with vehement senses and then forbid his gratifying them?

'Besides, to what end these trivial objections when good and evil alike are negatived? Does evil exist? If matter in all its manifestations is evil, evil is God.

'The faculty of reason, as well as the faculty of feeling, being bestowed on man for his use, nothing can be more pardonable than to seek a meaning in human suffering and to inquire into the future; if this rigid and rigorous logic leads us to such conclusions, what confusion is here! The world has then no stability; nothing moves on, and nothing stands still; everything changes, but nothing is destroyed; everything renews itself and reappears; for, if your mind cannot unanswerably prove an end, it is equally impossible to prove the annihilation of the smallest atom of matter: it may be transformed, but not destroyed. Though blind force may prove the atheist's position, intelligent force is inscrutable; for, if it proceeds from God, ought it to encounter any obstacles; ought it not to conquer them immediately?

'Where is God? If the living are not aware of Him, will the dead find Him?

'Crumble into dust, O idolatries and creeds! Fall, O too feeble keystones of the social arches, for ye have never retarded the destruction, the death, the oblivion, that have come upon all the nations of the past, however securely they were founded. Fall, O morality and justice! Our crimes are but relative, they are divine results of which the causes are unknown to us! Everything is God. Either we are God, or God is not! Child of an age of which each year has left on your brow the cold touch of its scepticism—Old Man! this is the sum-total of your science and your long meditations!

'Dear Pastor Becker, you have rested your head on the pillow of doubt, finding it the easiest solution, acting indeed like the majority of the human race. They say to themselves, "We will think no more of this question

if God will not vouchsafe us an algebraic demonstration for its solution, while He has given us so many that lead us safely up from the earth to the stars——

'Now, are not these your secret thoughts? Have I missed them? Have I not, on the contrary, precisely stated them?—Either the dogma of the two elementary principles, an antagonism in which God is destroyed by the very fact that He—who is Almighty—plays at a struggle; or the ridiculous Pantheism in which all things being God, God is no more—these two founts, whence flow the creeds to whose triumph the earth is devoted, are equally pernicious.

'There, between us, lies the two-edged axe with which you behead the white-haired Ancient of Days whom you enthrone on painted clouds!

'Now, give me the axe!'

The pastor and Wilfrid looked at the girl in a sort of dismay.

'Belief,' said Seraphita in her gentle voice—for the man had been speaking hitherto—'belief is a gift! Belief is feeling. To believe in God, you must feel God. This sense is a faculty slowly acquired by the human being, as those wonderful powers are acquired which you admire in great men—in warriors, artists, men of science—those who act, those who produce, those who know. Thought, a bundle of the relations which you discern between different things, is an intellectual language that may be learned, is it not? Belief, a bundle of heavenly truths, is in the same way a language, but as far above thought as thought is above instinct. This language too can be learned.

'The believer answers in a single cry, a single sign; faith places in his hand a flaming sword which cuts and throws light on everything. The seer does not come down again from heaven; he contemplates it and is silent. There is a being who both believes and sees, who has knowledge and power, who loves, prays, and

waits. That being is resigned, and aspires to the realm of light; he has neither the believer's lofty scorn, nor the Seer's dumbness; he both listens and replies. To him the doubt of the dark ages is not a lethal weapon, but a guiding clue; he accepts the battle in whatever guise; he can accommodate his tongue to every language; he is never wroth, he pities; he neither condemns nor kills, he redeems and comforts; he has not the harshness of an aggressor, but rather the mild fluidity of light which penetrates and warms and lights up every place. In his eyes scepticism is not impiety, is not blasphemy, is not a crime; it is a stage of transition whence a man must go forward towards the light, or back into the darkness.

'So now, dear Pastor, let us reason together. You do not believe in God. Why?—God, as you express it, is incomprehensible and inexplicable. I grant it. I will not retort that to comprehend God altogether is to be God. I will not tell you that you deny what you think inexplicable simply to give myself a right of affirming what seems to me believable. To you there is an evident fact dwelling within you. In you matter is conterminous with intelligence; and yet you think that human intelligence will end in darkness, in doubt, in nothingness? Even if God seems to you incomprehensible and inexplicable, confess at least that in all physical phenomena you recognise in Him a consistent and exquisite Craftsman.

'Then why should His logic end at man, as His most finished work? Though the question may not be convincing, it deserves some consideration at any rate. Though you deny God, to give a basis to your doubts, you happily can appreciate certain double-edged truths which demolish your arguments as effectually as your arguments demolish God.

'We both admit that matter and spirit are two separate creations, neither of which contains the other;

that the spiritual world consists of infinite relations to which the finite material world gives rise; and that whereas no one on earth has ever been able to identify himself by a sheer effort of mind with the sum-total of earthly creations, all the more certainly can he not rise to an apprehension of the relations which the spirit discerns between these creations. So I might end the matter with one blow by denying you the faculty of understanding God, just as you deny the pebbles by the fiord the faculty of counting or of seeing themselves. How do you know that they may not deny the existence of man, though man uses them to build his house with?

'There is one fact which overthrows you—Infinitude. If you feel it within you, how is it that you do not recognise the consequences? Can the finite fully apprehend the infinite? If you cannot comprehend the relations which, by your own admission, are infinite, how can you comprehend the remote finality in which they are summed up? Order, of which the manifestation is one of your needs, being infinite, can your finite reason comprehend it?

'Nor need you inquire why man cannot comprehend all he can conceive of, for he likewise can conceive of much that he cannot comprehend. If I were to prove to you that your mind is ignorant of everything that lies within its grasp, would you grant me that it is impossible for it to conceive of what lies beyond it? Should I not be justified, then, in saying, "One of the alternatives which bring God to nought at the bar of your judgment must be true and the other false; Creation exists, you feel the need for an end; must not that end be a noble one? Now, if in man matter is conterminous with intelligence, why can you not be satisfied to grant that human intelligence ends where the light begins of those superior spheres for which is reserved the intuition of the God who, to you, is merely an insoluble problem?

'The species lower than man have no comprehension

of the universe; you have. Why should there not be, above man again, species more intelligent than he? Before using his powers to take measure of God, would not man do well to know more about himself? Before defying the stars that give him light, before attacking transcendent truths, ought he not rather to verify the truths that immediately concern him?

'But I should answer the negations of doubt by negation. Well, then, I ask you: Is there here on earth a single thing so self-evident that I am bound to believe in it? I will show you in a minute that you believe firmly in things that can act and yet are not beings, that can give birth to thought and yet are not spirits, in living abstractions which the understanding cannot grasp under any shape, which nowhere exist, but which you can everywhere find; which have no possible names—though you have given them names; which, like the God in human form whom you conceive of, perish before the inexplicable, the incomprehensible, and the absurd. And I will ask you: If you admit these things, why do you reserve your doubts for God?

'You believe in Number as the foundation on which rests the edifice of what you call the exact sciences. Without number mathematics are impossible. Well, then, what impossible being, to whom life everlasting should be granted, could ever finish counting—and in what sufficiently concise language could he utter—the numbers contained in the infinite number of which the existence is demonstrated by your reason. Ask the greatest human genius, and suppose him to sit for a thousand years leaning on a table, his head in his hands, what would he answer?

'You know neither where number begins, where it pauses, nor where it ends. Now you call it time, anon you call it space; by number only does anything exist; but for number all substance would be one and the same; it alone differentiates and modifies matter. Number is

to your mind what it is to matter, an intangible agent. But will you then make a god of it? Is it a being? Is it a breath of God sent forth to organise the material universe, wherein nothing takes shape but as a result of divisibility which is an effect of number? The most minute as well as the most immense objects in creation are distinguished from each other by quantity, quality, dimension, and force,—are not these all conditions of number? That number is infinite is a fact proved to your intellect, but of which no material proof is obtainable. A mathematician will tell you that infinity of number is certain, but cannot be demonstrated. And, my dear Pastor, believers will tell you that God is Number endowed with motion, to be felt but not proved. He, like the unit, is the origin of number though having nothing in common with numbers. The existence of Number depends on that of the unit, which is not a number, but the parent of them all. And God, dear Pastor Becker, is a stupendous Unit, having nothing in common with His creations, but their Parent nevertheless.

'You must grant me that you are equally ignorant as to where number begins or ends, and as to where created eternity begins or ends? Why, then, if you believe in number, should you deny God? Does not creation hold a place between the infinite of inorganic substances and the infinite of the Divine spheres, as the unit stands between the infinite of fractions—lately termed decimals—and the infinite numbers you call whole numbers? Men alone on earth comprehend number, the first step to the forecourt leading to God, and even there reason stumbles. What! you can neither measure nor grasp the primary abstraction proposed to you, and you want to apply your puny standard to the ends of God's purpose? What if I should cast you into the bottomless depths of Motion, the force which organises number?

'If I were to tell you that the universe is nothing but Number and Motion, we should already, you see, be speaking a different language. I understand both terms; you do not. What, then, if I should go on to say that motion and number are generated by the Word? This term, the Supreme Reason of seers and prophets, who of old heard the voice of God that overthrew St. Paul, is a laughing-stock to you—you men, though your own visible works—communities, monuments, actions, and passions—all are the outcome of your own feeble Word; and though without speech you would still be no higher than the Orang of the woods, the great ape that is so nearly akin to the Negro.

'Well, you believe firmly in number and motion, inexplicable and incomprehensible as force and result, though I might apply to their existence the same logical dilemma as just now relieved you of the necessity of acknowledging that of God. You, a powerful reasoner, will surely relieve me of the necessity for proving that the Infinite must be everywhere the same, and that it is inevitably one? God alone is the Infinite, for there obviously cannot be two Infinites. If, to use words in their human sense, anything proved to you here on earth strikes you as infinite, you may be sure you have in that a glimpse of one aspect of God.

'To proceed: you have found for yourselves a place in the Infinite of number; you have fitted it to your stature by creating arithmetic—if you can be said to create anything—the basis on which everything is built up, even society. Arithmetic, or the use of number, has organised the moral world, just as number, the only thing in which your professing Atheists believe, organises physical creation. This science of numbers ought to be absolute, like everything that is intrinsically true; but it is, in fact, purely relative, it has no absolute existence. You can give no proof of its reality.

'To begin with, though this science is apt at summing

up organised substances, it is impotent as applied to organising forces, since these are infinite, whereas the former are finite. Man, whose intellect can conceive of the Infinite, cannot deal with it as a whole; if he could, he would be God. Hence your arithmetic, as applied to finite things and not to the Infinite, is true in relation to the details you apprehend, but false in relation to the whole which you cannot apprehend. Though nature does not vary in her organising forces and her elementary causes, which are infinite, she is never the same in her finite results. Hence in all nature you will find no two objects exactly alike.

'Thus, in the order of nature, two and two can never really make four, since the units would have to be exactly equal; and you know that it is impossible to find two leaves alike on one tree, or two specimens alike of the same species of tree. This axiom of arithmetic then, which is false as regards visible nature, is no less false in the invisible nature of your abstractions, where there is the same dissimilarity in your ideas which are derived from the objects of the visible world, only extended in their relations; in fact, differences are even more strongly marked there than elsewhere. Everything there being modified by the temperament, the strength, the manners, and the habits of individuals, who are never alike, the most trifling matters are representative of personal character.

'If man has ever succeeded in creating an unit, it was, no doubt, by assigning equal weight and value to certain pieces of gold. Well, add a rich man's ducat to a poor man's, and tell yourself that to the public treasury these are equal quantities; but in the eyes of a thoughtful man, one, morally speaking, is unquestionably greater than the other; one represents a month's happiness, the other the most transient caprice. Two and two only make four in the sense of a false and monstrous abstraction.

'A fraction, again, has no existence in nature, since

what you call a part is a thing complete in itself; and does it not often happen—and have we not proof of the fact—that the hundredth part of some substance may be stronger than what you call the whole? And if a fraction has no existence in the natural world, far less does it exist in the moral world, where ideas and feelings may be as various as the species of the vegetable kingdom, but are always a whole. The theory of fractions, then, is another concession of the mind. Number, with its "infinitely small" and its "infinite total," is a power of which a small part only is known to you, while its extent evades you. You have built a little cottage in the infinitude of number; you have adorned it with hieroglyphics very learnedly designed and painted; and you have said, "Everything is here!"

'From abstract number we will pass on to number as applied to solids. Your geometry states it as an axiom that a straight line is the shortest way from one point to another; and astronomy shows you that God has given motion only in curves. Here, then, in the same science, are two facts equally well proved—one by the evidence of your senses, aided by the telescope; the other by the testimony of your mind; but one contradicts the other. Man, who is liable to error, asserts one, and the Maker of the worlds—whom you have never found in error—contradicts it. Who can decide between rectilinear and curvilinear geometry?—between the theory of straight lines and the theory of curved lines? If, in His work, the mysterious Maker, who attains His ends with miraculous directness, only makes use of the straight line to divide it at a right angle and obtain a curve, man himself cannot rely on it: the bullet a man wishes to send in a straight line follows a curve, and when you want to hit a point in space with certainty you propel the ball on its cruel parabola. Not one of your learned men has arrived at the simple induction that the curved line is that of the material world, and

the straight line that of the spiritual world; that one is the theory of finite creation, and the other the theory of the infinite. Man alone—he alone here on earth having any consciousness of the infinite—can know the straight line; he alone, in a special organ, has the sense of the vertical. May not the predilection for curved lines in some men be an indication of the impurity of their nature, still too closely allied to the material substances which engender us? and may not the love for straight lines, seen in lofty minds, be in them a presentiment of heaven? Between these two lines lies a gulf as wide as between the Finite and the Infinite, between Matter and Spirit, between Man and the Idea, between Motion and the Thing moved, between the Creature and God. Borrow the wings of Divine Love and you may cross that gulf. Beyond it the revelation of the Word begins!

'The things you call material are nowhere devoid of thickness; lines are the edges of solids having a power of action which you ignore in your theorems, and that makes them false in relation to bodies regarded as a whole; hence the constant destruction of human works, to which you have unwittingly given active properties. Nature knows nothing but solid bodies; your science deals only with combinations of surfaces. And so nature constantly gives the lie to all your laws: can you name one to which no fact makes an exception? The laws of statics are contradicted by a thousand incidents in physics; a fluid overthrows the most stupendous mountains, and so proves that the heaviest substances may be upheaved by imponderable agents. Your laws of acoustics and optics are nullified by the sounds you hear in your brain during sleep, and by the light of an electric flash, of which the rays are often overpowering. You do not know how light is brought to your intelligence, any more than you know the simple and natural process by which it is changed to ruby, sapphire,

opal, and emerald on the neck of an Indian bird, while it lies dim and grey on the same bird under the misty sky of Europe, nor why it beams perpetually white here in the heart of the polar regions. You cannot tell whether colour is a faculty with which bodies are endowed, or an effect produced by the diffusion of light.

'You believe the whole sea to be salt without having ascertained that it is so in its deepest places.

'You recognise the existence of various substances which traverse what you call the Void: substances intangible under any known form assumed by matter, and which meet and combine with it in spite of every obstacle. That being the case, you believe in the results obtained by chemistry, though as yet it knows no method of estimating the changes produced by the currents to and fro of those substances as they pass through your crystals and your instruments on the inappreciable waves of heat or of light, conducted or repelled by the affinities of metals or vitrified flint. You obtain no substances but what are dead, out of which you have driven the unknown force which resists decomposition in all earthly things, the force of which attraction, undulation, cohesion, and polarity are manifestations.

'Life is the mind of body; bodies are but a mode of detaining it, of delaying it in its transit; if bodies were themselves living things, they would be a cause; they would not die. When a man establishes the results of the motion of which every form of creation has its share in proportion to its power of absorbing it, you call him a Learned Man, as though genius consisted in explaining what exists. Genius should lift its eyes above effects. All your learned men would laugh if you should say to them, "There is a certain connecting relation between two beings, such as that if one of them were here and the other in Java, they might feel the same sensation at the same instant, and be aware of the fact, and question and answer each other without a mistake." And

yet there are some mineral substances which exhibit sympathies as far reaching as that of which I speak. You believe in the power of electricity when it is fixed in the lodestone, but you deny it as emanating from the soul. According to you, the moon, whose influence over the tides seems to you proven, has none over the winds, over vegetation, or over men; it can move the sea and eat into glass, but it cannot affect the sick; it has undoubted effects on one-half of the human race; none on the other half. These are your most precious convictions.

'We may go further: You believe in physics; but your physics are based, like the Catholic religion, on an act of faith. Do they not recognise an external force apart from bodies to which it imparts movement? You see its effects, but what is *it*? Where is it? What is its essence, its life? Has it any limits?—— And you deny God!

'Thus most of your scientific axioms, though true in relation to man, are false in relation to the Whole. Science is one, and you have divided it. To know the true sense of the laws of phenomena, would it not be necessary to know the correlations existing between the phenomena and the laws of the whole? There is in all things an appearance, a presentment, which strikes your sense; behind this presentment there is a soul moving—the body, and the faculty. Where are the relations which hold things together studied or taught? Nowhere. Have you, then, no absolute finality? Your best ascertained theses rest on an analysis of the forms of matter, while the spirit is constantly neglected.

'There is a supreme science of which some men—too late—get a glimpse, though they dare not own it. These men perceive the necessity for considering all bodies, not merely from the point of view of their mathematical properties, but also from that of their whole relations and occult affinities.

'The greatest of you all discerned, towards the end of his life, that all things were at the same time cause and effect reciprocally; that the visible worlds were co-ordinated to each other and captive to invisible spheres. He groaned over having tried to establish absolute principles. When counting his worlds, like grains of sand scattered throughout the ether, he explained their connection by the laws of planetary and molecular attraction. You hailed that man.—Well, and I tell you that he died in despair. Assuming that the centrifugal and centripetal forces, which he invented to account for the universe, were absolutely equal, the universe would stand still, and he insisted on motion, though in an undefined direction; but assuming the forces to be unequal, the worlds must at once fall into confusion. Thus his laws were not final; there was another problem still higher than that of attraction, on which his spurious glory was founded. The pull of the stars against each other, and the centripetal tendency of their individual motion, did not hinder him from seeking the branch from which the whole cluster was hanging. Unhappy man; the more he extended space, the heavier was his load. He told you that every part was in equilibrium; but whither was the whole bound?

'He contemplated the space, infinite in the eyes of men, that is filled with the groups of worlds, of which a small number are registered by our telescopes, while its immensity is proved by the rapidity of light. This sublime contemplation gave him a conception of the infinitude of worlds, planted in space like flowers in a meadow, which are born like infants, grow like men, die like old men, which live by assimilating from their atmosphere the substances proper to nourish them, which have a centre and principle of life, which protect themselves from each other by an intervening space, which constitute a grand whole, that has its own life, its own destination.

'At this prospect the man trembled. He knew that life is produced by the union of the Thing with its first Principle; that death, or inertia—or gravitation—is caused by a rupture between the Thing and the motion proper to it; and he thus foresaw the crash of worlds, in ruins if God should withhold His Word. Then he set to work to seek the traces of that Word in the Apocalypse. You all thought him mad. Know this: he strove to earn forgiveness for his genius.

'Wilfrid, you came to request me to resolve equations, to fly on a rain-cloud, to plunge into the fiord and reappear as a swan. If science or miracle were the end of humanity, Moses would have left you a calculus of fluxions; Jesus Christ would have cleared up the dark places of science; His apostles would have told you whence come those immense trains of gas or of fused metals which rush revolving on a nucleus, solidifying as they seek a place in the ether, and are sometimes violently projected within range of a system where they are absorbed by a star, or crash into it by their shock, or dissolve it by the infusion of deadly vapours. St. Paul, instead of bidding you live in God, would have explained to you that nutrition is the secret bond among all creation, and the visible bond among all living animals. In our own day, the greatest miracle would be to square the circle, a problem which you pronounce impossible, but which has no doubt been solved in the progress of worlds by the intersection of some mathematical line, whose curves are apparent to the eye of spirits elevated to the highest spheres.

'Believe me, miracles are within us and not without us. Thus have natural effects been wrought, which the nations deemed to be supernatural. Would not God have been unjust if He had vouchsafed to show His power to some generations, and had refused it to others? The Brazen Rod belongs to all. Neither Moses nor Jacob, neither Zoroaster nor Paul, nor

Pythagoras nor Swedenborg, neither the most obscure evangelists nor the most amazing of God's prophets, have been superior to what you might become. Only, nations have their day of faith. If positive science were indeed the end of all human effort, how is it—confess now—that every social community, every great centre to which men gather, is invariably broken up by Providence? If civilisation were the final cause of the human species, could intelligence perish? Would it perennially continue to be a purely individual possession?

'The greatness of all the nations that have ever been great has been founded on exceptions: when the exception ceased to be, the power was dead. Would not the Seers, the Prophets, the Evangelists, have laid their hand on science instead of relying on faith; would they not have hammered at your brains rather than have touched your hearts? They all came to drive the nations to God; they all proclaimed the way of life in the simple words which lead to the Heavenly Kingdom; and fired with love and faith, and inspired by the Word which hovers over the nations, compels them, vivifies them, and uplifts them, they never used it for any human end. Your great geniuses, poets, kings, and sages are swallowed up with their towns, and the desert has buried them under a shroud of sand; while the names of these good shepherds still are blessed and survive every catastrophe.

'We can never agree on any point. Gulfs lie between us. You are on the side of darkness, I live in the true light.

'Is this the word you desired of me? I utter it with joy; it may change you. Know, then, that there are sciences of Matter and sciences of the Spirit. Where you see bodies, I see forces tending towards each other by a creative impulse. To me the character of a body is the sign-manual of its first principles and the expres-

sion of its properties. These principles give rise to certain affinities which elude you, but which are connected with centres. The different species to which life is distributed are unfailing springs which communicate with each other. Each has its specific function.

'Man is at once cause and effect; he is nourished, but he nourishes in return. When you call God the Creator, you belittle Him. He did not, as you imagine, create plants, animals, and the stars; could He act by such various means? Must He not have proceeded by unity of purpose? He emitted principles which were compelled to develop in accordance with His general laws, and subject to the conditions of their environment?

'In point of fact, all the affinities are bound together by immediate similarities; the life of worlds is attracted to centres by a greedy aspiration, just as you are all driven by hunger to seek nourishment. To give you an instance of affinities linked to similarities: the secondary law on which the creations of your mind rest—music, a celestial art—is the active evidence of this principle: is it not an assemblage of sounds harmonised by number? Is not sound a condition of the air under compression, dilatation, and repercussion? You know of what the air is composed? Azote, carbon, and oxygen. Since you can produce no sound in a vacuum, it is evident that music and the human voice are the result of organic chemical elements, acting in unison with the same substances prepared within you by your mind, and co-ordinated by means of light, the great foster-mother of this globe; for can you have cogitated on the quantities of nitre deposited by the snows, on the discharge of thunder, on plants which derive from the air the elements they contain, and have failed to conclude that it is the sun that fuses and diffuses the subtle essence which nourishes all things here below? Swedenborg truly said, "The earth is a man."

'All your sciences of to-day, which make you so

great in your own eyes, are a mere trifle compared with the light that floods the Seer.

'Cease, cease to question me; we speak a different language. I have used yours for once, to throw a flash of faith upon your souls, to cast a corner of my mantle over you, and tempt you away to the glorious regions of prayer. Is it God's part to stoop to you? Is it not yours rather to rise to Him? If human reason has so soon exhausted the limits of its powers merely by laying God out to prove His existence, without succeeding in doing so, is it not evident that it must seek some other way of knowing Him? That other way is in ourselves. The Seer and the believer have within themselves eyes more piercing than are those eyes which are bent on things of earth, and they discern a dawn.

'Understand this saying: Your most exact sciences, your boldest speculations, your brightest flashes of light, are but clouds. Above them all is the sanctuary whence the true Light is shed.'

She sat down and was silent; and her calm features betrayed not the least sign of the trepidation which commonly disturbs an orator after his least inflamed speech.

Wilfrid whispered into the pastor's ear, leaning over him to do so—

'Who told her all this?'

'I do not know,' was the reply.

'He was milder on the Falberg,' Minna remarked.

Seraphita passed her hands over her eyes, and said with a smile—

'You are very pensive this evening, gentlemen. You treat me and Minna like men to whom you would talk politics or discuss trade, while we are but girls to whom you should tell fairy-tales while drinking tea, as is the custom in our evenings in Norway.—Come, Pastor Becker, tell me some Saga which I do not know. That of Frithiof, in which you believe, and which you

promised to tell me, or the story of the peasant's son who has a ship that speaks and has a soul? I dream of the frigate *Ellida*. Is it not on that fairy vessel that girls should sail the seas?'

'Since we have come down to Jarvis again,' said Wilfrid, whose eyes were fixed on Seraphita as those of a robber hidden in the gloom are fixed on the spot where treasure lies, 'tell me why you do not marry?'

'You are all born widowers or widows,' replied she. 'My marriage was decided on at my birth; I am betrothed——'

'To whom?' they all asked in a breath.

'Allow me to keep my secret,' said she. 'I promise, if our father will grant it, to invite you to that mysterious wedding.'

'Is it to be soon?'

'I am waiting.'

A long silence ensued.

'The spring is come,' said Seraphita. 'The noise of waters and of breaking ice has begun; will you not come to hail the first springtime of the new century?'

She rose and, followed by Wilfrid, went to a window which David had thrown open. After the long stillness of winter, the vast waters were stirring beneath the ice, and sang through the fiord like music; for there are sounds which distance glorifies, and which reach the ear in waves that seem to bring refreshment and light.

'Cease, Wilfrid,' said she, 'cease to cherish evil thoughts whose triumph will be a torment to endure. Who could fail to read your wishes in the sparkle of your eyes? Be good; take a step in welldoing! Is it not a step beyond the mere love of men to sacrifice yourself entirely to the happiness of the one you love? Submit to me, and I will lead you into a path where you will attain to all the greatness you dream of, and where love will be really infinite.'

She left Wilfrid lost in thought.

'Can this gentle creature really be the prophetess who but now flashed lightnings from her eyes, whose words thundered about the worlds, whose hand wielded the axe of Doubt in defiance of our sciences ?' said he to himself. 'Have we been asleep for these few minutes ?'

'Minna,' said Seraphitus, returning to the pastor's daughter, 'the eagles gather where the dead lie, the turtle-dove flies to the springs of living water under green and peaceful groves. The eagle soars to the skies, the dove descends from them. Venture no more into regions where you will find neither fountains nor shade. If this morning you could not look into the gulf without destruction, keep your powers for him who will love you. Go, poor child, I am betrothed, as you know.'

Minna rose and went with Seraphitus to the window, where Wilfrid still was standing. They could all three hear the Sieg leaping under the force of the upper waters, which were bringing down the trees that had been frozen into the ice. The fiord had found its voice again. Illusion was over. They wondered at Nature bursting her bonds, and answering in noble harmonies to the Spirit whose call had awakened her.

When the three guests had left this mysterious being, they were filled with an indefinable feeling which was not sleep, nor torpor, nor astonishment, but a mixture of all three, which was neither twilight nor daybreak, but which made them long for light. They were all very thoughtful.

'I begin to think that she is a spirit veiled in human form,' said the pastor.

Wilfrid, in his own room again, calmed and convinced, knew not how to contend with powers so divinely majestic.

Minna said to herself—

'Why will he not allow me to love him ?'

V

THE FAREWELL

There is in man a phenomenon which is the despair of those reflective minds who endeavour to find some meaning in the march of social vicissitudes, and to formulate some laws of progress for the movement of intellect. However serious a fact may be, or, if supernatural facts could exist, however magnificent a miracle could be, publicly performed, the lightning flash of the fact, the thunderbolt of the miracle would be lost in the moral ocean, and the surface, rippled for an instant by some slight ebullition, would at once resume the level of its ordinary swell.

Does the Voice, to be more surely heeded, pass through an animal's jaws? Does the Hand write in strange characters on the cornice of the hall where the Court is revelling? Does the Eye light up the King's slumbers? Does the Prophet read the dream? Does Death, when summoned, stand in the luminous space where a man's faculties revive? Does the Spirit crush matter at the foot of the mystical ladder of the seven spiritual worlds hung one above another in space, and seen by the floods of light that fall in cascades down the steps of the heavenly floor? Still, however deep the inner revelation, however distinct the outward sign, by the morrow Balaam doubts both his ass and himself; Belteshazzar and Pharaoh call in seers to explain the sign—Daniel or Moses.

The Spirit descends, snatches a man above the earth, opens the seas and shows him the bottom of them, calls up vanished generations, gives life to the dry bones thickly strewn in the great valley; the Apostle writes the *Apocalypse*; and twenty centuries later human science

confirms the Apostle and translates his figures of speech into axioms. What difference does it make? The mass of people live to-day as they lived yesterday, as they lived in the first Olympiad, as they lived the first day after creation, and on the eve of the great cataclysm. Doubt drowns everything in its waters. The same waves beat, with the selfsame ebb and flow, on the human granite that hems in the sea of intellect.

Man asks himself whether indeed he saw what he saw, whether he really heard the words that were spoken, whether the fact was a fact, and the idea really an idea; and then he goes on his way, he thinks of his business, he obeys the inevitable servitor of Death—Forgetfulness, who throws his black cloak over the old humanity of which the younger has no remembrance. Man never ceases to move, to go on, to grow as a vegetable grows, till the day when the axe falls. If this flood-like force, this mounting pressure of bitter waters, hinders all progress, it also, no doubt, is a warning of death. None but the loftier spirits open to faith can discern Jacob's mystical stair.

After listening to the reply in which Seraphita, being so urgently questioned, had unrolled the divine scroll, as an organ fills a church with its roar, and shows the power of the musical universe by flooding the most inaccessible vaults with its solemn notes, playing, like light, among the frail wreaths of the capitals, Wilfrid went home, appalled at having seen the world in ruins, and, above the ruins, a light unknown, shed by the hand of that young creature.

On the following day he was still thinking of it, but his terrors were allayed; he was not in ruins, nor even changed—his passions and ideas woke up fresh and vigorous.

He went to breakfast with the Minister, and found him lost in the study of Jean Wier's treatise, which he had been looking through that morning to be able to

reassure his visitor. With the childlike simplicity of a sage, the pastor had turned down the leaves at some pages where Jean Wier adduced authentic evidence demonstrating the possibility of such things as had happened the day before; for to the learned an idea is an event, whereas the greatest events are to them hardly an idea.

By the time these two philosophers had swallowed their fifth cup of tea, that mystical evening seemed quite natural. The heavenly truths were more or less substantial arguments, and open to discussion. Seraphita was a more or less eloquent girl; allowance must be made for her exquisite voice, her enchanting beauty, her fascinating manner, all the oratorical skill by which an actor can put a world of feelings and ideas into a sentence which in itself is often quite commonplace.

'Pooh!' said the good minister, with a little philosophical grimace, as he spread a slice of bread with salt butter, 'the answer to all these riddles is six feet beneath the mould!'

'At the same time,' said Wilfrid, sugaring his tea, 'I cannot understand how a girl of sixteen can know so many things; for she squeezed everything into her speech as if it were in a vice.'

'But only read the story of the Italian girl who, at twelve years old, could speak forty-two languages, ancient and modern,' said the pastor. 'And again, that of the monk who read thought by smell. These are in Jean Wier, and in a dozen other treatises which I will give you to read, a thousand proofs rather than one.'

'I daresay, my dear Pastor; but Seraphita remains to me a wife it would be divine joy to possess.'

'She is all intellect,' replied the minister dubiously.

Some days passed by, during which the snow in the valleys insensibly melted away; the greenery of the forests peeped through like a fresh growth; Norwegian nature made itself beautiful in anticipation of its brief

bridal day. All this time, though the milder temperature allowed of open-air exercise, Seraphita remained in solitary seclusion. Thus Wilfrid's passion was enhanced by the aggravating vicinity of the girl he loved, and who refused to be seen. When the inscrutable being admitted Minna, Minna could detect the symptoms of an inward fever; Seraphita's voice was hollow, and her complexion was wan; whereas hitherto its transparency might have been compared by a poet to that of the diamond, it now had the sheen of the topaz.

'Have you seen her?' asked Wilfrid, who had prowled round the house, awaiting Minna's return.

'We shall lose him!' said the girl, her eyes filling with tears.

'Do not try to fool me!' cried the stranger, controlling the vehemence of tone that expressed his fury. 'You can only love Seraphita as one girl loves another, not with such love as I feel for her. You cannot conceive what peril you would be in if there were anything to alarm my jealousy.—Why can I not go to see her? Is it you who raise difficulties?'

'I cannot think,' said Minna, calm on the surface, but quaking with mortal terror, 'what right you have to sound the depths of my heart.—Yes, I love him,' she went on, summoning the courage of conviction to confess the faith of her soul. 'But my jealousy, though natural to love, fears nobody here. Alas! What I am jealous of is some unconfessed feeling in which he is absorbed. Between him and me lies a space I can never abridge. I want to know whether the stars love him more than I, whether they or I would be the more eagerly devoted to his happiness? Why, why, should I not be free to declare my affection? In the presence of death we may all confess our attachment—and Seraphitus is dying.'

'Minna, indeed you are under a mistake; the siren round whom my desires have so often hovered, who

allows me to admire her as she reclines on her couch, so graceful, fragile, and suffering, is not a man.'

'Nay,' replied Minna, in some agitation, 'he whose powerful hand guided me over the Falberg to the sœter under the shelter of the Ice-cap up there'—and she pointed to the peak—'is certainly not a mere, weak girl. If you had but heard her prophesy! Her poetry is the music of thought. No young girl could have had the solemn depth of voice which stirred my soul.'

'What certainty have you——?' Wilfrid began.

'None but that of my heart!' replied Minna in confusion, and hastily interrupting the speaker.

'Well, but I,' cried Wilfrid, with a terrible glance of murderous eagerness and desire, 'I, who know what the extent of her power is over me—I will prove your mistake.'

At this moment, when words were rushing to Wilfrid's tongue as vehemently as ideas in his head, he saw Seraphita come out of the Swedish Castle, followed by David. The sight of her soothed his effervescent state.

'Look,' said he; 'none but a woman can have that grace and languor.'

'He is ill; it is his last walk!' said Minna.

At a sign from his mistress, David left her, and she advanced towards Wilfrid and Minna.

'Let us go to the falls of the Sieg,' said the mysterious being; it was the wish of a sufferer which all hasten to accede to.

A thin, white haze hung over the heights and dales of the fiord, and the peaks, glittering like stars, pierced above it, giving it the effect of a milky way moving onwards. Through this earth-born vapour the sun was visible as a globe of red-hot iron. In spite of these last freaks of winter, gusts of mild air, bringing the scent of the birch-trees, already covered with their yellow flowers, and the rich perfume exhaled by the larches, whose silky

tufts were all displayed—breezes warm with the incense and the breathing of the earth testified to the exquisite springtime of Northern lands, the brief rapture of a most melancholy nature.

The wind was beginning to roll away the veil of mist that hardly hid the view of the gulf. The birds were singing.

Where the sun had not dried off the frost that trickled down the road in murmuring rills, the bark of the trees was pleasing to the eye by its fantastic appearance.

They all three went along the strand in silence. Wilfrid and Minna were lost in contemplation of the magical scene after their long endurance of the monotonous winter landscape. Their companion was pensive, and walked as though trying to distinguish one voice in the concert. They reached the rocks between which the Sieg tumbles, at the end of the long avenue of ancient fir-trees which the torrent had cut in meandering through the forest, a path covered in by a groined arch of boughs, meeting like those of a cathedral. From thence the whole of the fiord was seen, and the sea sparkled on the horizon like a steel blade. At this instant the clouds vanished, showing the blue sky. Down in the hollows and round the trees the air was full of floating sparkles, the diamond dust swept up by a light breeze, and dazzling gems of drops were hanging at the tip of the branches of each pyramid. The torrent was rolling below ; a smoke came up from the surface, tinted in the sunshine with every hue of light ; its beams, decomposed, displayed perfect rainbows of the seven colours, like the play of a thousand prisms meeting and crossing there. This wild shore was curtained with various kinds of lichen, a rich web, sheeny with moisture, like some gorgeous hanging of silk. Heath, already in blossom, crowned the rocks with flowers in skilful disorder. All this stirring foliage, tempted by the living

waters, hung their heads over it like hair; the larches waved their lace-like arms, as if caressing the pines, that stood rigid like careworn old men.

This luxuriant display was a contrast to the solemnity of the antique colonnades of the forests, range upon range on the hillsides, and to the broad sheet of the fiord, in which the torrent drowned its fury at the feet of the three spectators. Beyond it all, the open sea closed in this picture, traced by the greatest of poets—Chance—to which we owe the medley beauty of creation when left, as it would seem, to itself. Jarvis was a speck almost lost in this landscape, in this immensity—sublime, as everything is, which, having but a brief existence, offers a transient image of perfection; for by a law, fatal only to our sight, creations that appear perfect, the delight of our heart and of our eyes, have but one spring to live here.

At the top of that cliff these three beings might easily fancy themselves alone in all the world.

'How exquisite!' exclaimed Wilfrid.

'Nature sings its hymns,' said Seraphita. 'Is not this music delicious? Confess now, Wilfrid, no woman you ever knew could create for herself so magnificent a retreat. Here I experience a feeling that the sight of great cities rarely inspires, and which makes me long to remain here, lying among these grasses of such rapid growth. Then, with my eyes on the sky, my heart laid bare, lost in the sense of immensity, I could let myself listen to the sighs of the flower, which, scarcely released from its primitive nature, would fain run about; and to the cries of the eider, aggrieved at having only wings, while I thought of the cravings of man, who has something of everything, and who also is for ever full of desires!—But this, Wilfrid, is a woman's poetic fancy! You can find a voluptuous thought in that hazy expanse of water; in those fantastic veils, behind which nature plays like some coquettish bride; and in this atmosphere,

where she perfumes her green hair for her bridal. You would fain see the form of a naiad in that wreath of mist, and I, as you think, ought to hear a manly voice in the torrent.'

'And is not love in it all, like a bee in a flower?' replied Wilfrid, who, seeing in her for the first time some trace of earthly feeling, thought it a favourable moment for the expression of his fervent affection.

'Always the same?' said Seraphita, laughing, Minna having left them; the girl was climbing a crag where she had seen some blue saxifrages.

'Always!' exclaimed Wilfrid. 'Listen,' he said, with an imperious glance that met a panoply of adamant, 'you know not who I am, nor what my power is, nor what I demand. Do not reject my last entreaty. Be mine, for the sake of the world within your heart! Be mine, that my conscience may be pure, that a heavenly voice may sound in my ears and inspire me aright in the undertaking I have vowed to carry out, impelled by my hatred of the nations, but to be achieved for their welfare if only you are with me. What nobler mission may a woman dream of?—I came to these lands meditating a great scheme.'

'And you are prepared to sacrifice it and its glories,' said she, 'to a very simple girl, whom you will love, and who will guide you into a peaceful path?'

'What do I care? I only want you! This is my secret,' he replied, going on with his speech. 'I have travelled all over the North, the great workshop where the new races are produced who overspread the earth like floods of humanity sent forth to renew worn-out civilisation. I wanted to have begun my work on one of these points, conquering there the ascendency that force and intellect can assert over a small race; to have trained it to battle, to have declared war, and have sent it raging like a conflagration to consume Europe, while shouting to these "Liberty!" to those "Plunder!" to some "Glory!"

to others "Pleasure!" I, standing meanwhile like the image of Fate, pitiless and cruel, moving like the storm which assimilates from the atmosphere the atoms of which the lightning is compounded, and feeding on men like a rapacious monster. I should then have conquered Europe; she is now at a period when she looks for the coming of the new Messiah, who is to devastate the world and to re-form the nations. Europe can believe in no one but Him who will trample her under foot.

'Some day historians and poets would have justified my existence, have magnified me, have ascribed great ideas to me—to me, to whom this huge pleasantry, written in blood, is but revenge.

'But, dear Seraphita, what I have seen has disgusted me with the North; force here is too blind, and I crave for the Indies. A duel with a selfish, cowardly, and mercenary government fascinates me more. Besides, it is easier to arouse the imagination of the races that dwell at the foot of Caucasus than to convince the minds of men in these frozen lands. I am tempted to cross the Russian steppes, to reach the frontiers of Asia, to cover it as far as the Ganges with my victorious flood of human beings, and then I shall overthrow the English rule. Seven men, at different periods, have already carried out such a scheme. I shall renew Art, as the Saracens did when Mahomet cast them over Europe. I will not be so sordid a king as those who now govern the ancient provinces of the Roman Empire, quarrelling with their subjects over custom-house dues. No, nothing shall arrest the flash of my gaze or the storm of my speech! My feet, like those of Genghis Khan, shall cover a third of the globe; my hand shall grasp Asia as did that of Aurung Zeeb.

'Be my partner; take your seat, fair and lovely being, on a throne. I have never doubted my success, but with you to dwell in my heart, I should be certain of it.'

'I have reigned already,' said Seraphita.

The words were like the blow dealt by the axe of a skilful woodsman at the root of a sapling, felling it at once. Men alone can know what a storm a woman can rouse in a man's soul when he has been trying to impress her with his strength or his power, his intellect or his superiority, and the capricious fair nods her head and says, 'Oh, that is nothing!' or, with a bored smile, observes, 'I know all that,' when power is as nought to her.

'What!' cried Wilfrid in despair, 'the riches of Art, the wealth of the world, the splendour of a court——'

She checked him by a mere curl of her lips, and said—

'Beings more powerful than you are have offered me more.'

'Well, have you no soul, then, that you are not fascinated by the prospect of consoling a great man who will sacrifice everything to dwell with you in a little home by the side of a lake?'

'Why,' said she, 'I am lòved with a boundless love.'

'By whom?' cried Wilfrid, going towards Seraphita with a frenzied gesture, as if to fling her into the foaming falls of the Sieg.

She looked at him; his arm dropped; and she pointed to Minna, who came running down, all rose and white, and as pretty as the flowers she carried in her hand.

'My child!' said Seraphitus, going forward to meet her.

Wilfrid stood on the edge of the cliff as motionless as a statue, lost in thought, longing to cast himself into the flow of the torrent, like one of the fallen trees that passed under his eyes and vanished in the abyss beneath.

'I gathered them for you,' said Minna, giving the nosegay to the being she adored. 'One of them—this one,' said she, picking out a particular blossom, 'is like the flower we gathered on the Falberg.'

Seraphitus looked at the blossom and then at Minna.

'Why do you question me thus? Do you doubt me?'

'No,' said the girl, 'my confidence in you is unbounded. While you are far more beautiful to me than this beautiful scenery, you also seem to me to be superior in intelligence to all the rest of humanity. When I have been with you, I seem to have communed with God. I only wish——'

'What?' asked Seraphitus, with a flashing look that revealed to the girl the vast distance that divided them.

'I wish I could suffer in your stead.'

'This is the most dangerous of Thy creatures,' thought Seraphitus. 'Is it a criminal thought, O God, to long to present her to Thee?—Have you forgotten,' he said aloud, 'all I told you up there?' and he pointed upwards to the peak of the Ice-cap.

'Now he is terrible again!' thought Minna with a shudder.

The roar of the Sieg formed an accompaniment to the thoughts of these three beings, who stood together for a few minutes on a projecting slab of rock, parted, as they were, by immeasurable gulfs in the spiritual world.

'Teach me then, Seraphitus,' said Minna, in a voice as silvery as a pearl and as gentle as the movements of a sensitive plant. 'Teach me what I must do to avoid loving you? Who could fail to admire you? And love is the admiration that is never tired.'

'Poor child!' said Seraphitus, turning pale, 'only one Being can be loved thus.'

'Who is that?' asked Minna.

'You shall know!' was the reply in the weak voice of one who lies down to die.

'Help! He is dying!' cried Minna.

Wilfrid hastened forward, and seeing this being reclining gracefully on a block of gneiss over which time had thrown its carpet of velvet, its glistening lichens, and dusky mosses, lustrous in the sunshine,—

'She is lovely!' he exclaimed.

'This is the last glance I may give to nature in travail,' said Seraphita, collecting all her strength to rise. She went to the edge of the cliff, whence she could see the whole of the sublime landscape, but lately wrapped in its mantle of snow, now full of life, green and flowery.

'Farewell,' said she, 'oh, burning hot-bed of love! whence everything tends from the centre to the utmost circumference, while the extremities are gathered up, like a woman's hair, to be spun into the unknown plait by which thou art linked, in the invisible ether, to the Divine Idea!

'Behold him who is bending over the furrow, watered with his sweat, and pausing for an instant to look up to heaven; behold her who gathers the children in to feed them from her breast; him who knots the ropes in the fury of the tempest; her who sits in the niche of a rock awaiting her father; and, again, all those who hold out their hands for help after spending their life in thankless toil? Peace and courage to them all, and to all farewell!

'Do you hear the cry of the soldier who dies unknown, the wrath of the man who laments, disappointed, in the desert? Peace and courage to all, to all farewell! Farewell, you who die for the kings of the earth; but farewell, too, ye races without a native land, and farewell, lands without a people — seeking each other. Farewell, above all, to thee, sublime exile, who knowest not where to lay thy head! Farewell, dear innocents, dragged away by the hair of your head for having loved too well! Farewell, mothers sitting by your dying sons! Farewell, holy, broken-hearted wives! Farewell, O ye who are poor, young, weak, and suffering, whose woes I have so often made my own! Farewell, all ye who gravitate in the sphere of instinct, suffering there for others!

'Farewell, ye discoverers who seek the East through the thick darkness of abstractions as grand as first principles; and ye martyrs of thought, led by thought to the true light! Farewell, realms of inquiry, where I can hear the moans of insulted genius, the sigh of the sage to whom light comes—too late!

'I perceive the angelic harmonies, the wafted fragrance, the incense from the heart exhaled by those who move on, praying, comforting, diffusing divine light and heavenly balm to sorrowing souls. Courage, Choir of Love! to whom the nations cry, "Comfort us! Protect us!" Courage, and farewell!

'Farewell, rock of granite, thou shalt become a flower; farewell, flower, thou shalt be a dove; farewell, dove, thou shalt be a woman; farewell, woman, thou shalt be Suffering; farewell, man, thou shalt be Belief; farewell, you, who shall be all love and prayer!'

Exhausted by fatigue, this inexplicable being for the first time leaned on Wilfrid and Minna to support her back to her house. Wilfrid and Minna felt some mysterious contagion from her touch. They had gone but a few steps when they met David in tears.

'She is going to die; why have you brought her here?' he exclaimed from afar.

Seraphita was lifted up by the old man, who had recovered the strength of youth, and he flew with her to the door of the Swedish castle, like an eagle carrying some white lamb to his eyrie.

VI

THE ROAD TO HEAVEN

On the day after Seraphita had had this foretaste of her end, and had bidden farewell to the earth, as a prisoner looks at his cell before quitting it for ever, she was

suffering such pain as compelled her to remain in the absolute quietude of those who endure extreme anguish. Wilfrid and Minna went to see her, and found her lying on her couch of furs. Her soul, still shrouded in the flesh, shone through the veil, bleaching it, as it were, from day to day. The progress made by the spirit in undermining the last barrier which divided it from the infinite was called sickness; the hour of life was named death. David wept to see his mistress suffering, and refused to listen to her consolations; the old man was as unreasonable as a child. The pastor was urgent on Seraphita to take some remedies; but all was in vain.

One morning she asked for the two she had been so fond of, telling them that this was the last of her bad days. Wilfrid and Minna came in great alarm; they knew that they were about to lose her. Seraphita smiled at them, as those smile who are departing to a better world; her head drooped like a flower overweighted with dew, which opens its cup for the last time and exhales its last fragrance to the air. She looked at them with sadness, of which they were the cause; she had ceased to think of herself, and they felt this without being able to express their grief, mingled as it was with gratitude.

Wilfrid remained standing, silent and motionless, lost in such contemplation as is suggested by things so vast that they make us understand, here on earth, the Supreme Immensity. Minna, emboldened by the weakness of this powerful being, or perhaps by her dread of losing her beloved for ever, bent down and murmured, 'Seraphitus—let me follow you!'

'Can I hinder you?'

'But why do you not love me enough to remain here?'

'I could not love anything here.'

'What, then, do you love?'

'Heaven.'

'Are you worthy of heaven if you thus despise God's creatures here?'

'Minna, can we love two beings at the same time? Is the Best-beloved really the Best-beloved if He does not fill the whole heart? Ought He not to be the first and last and only One? Does not she who is all love quit the world for her Beloved? Her whole family becomes but a memory; she has but one relation—it is He! Her soul is no longer her own, but His! If she keeps anything within her that is not His, she does not love; no, she does not love! Is loving half-heartedly loving at all? The voice of the Beloved makes her all glad and flows through her veins like a purple tide, redder than the blood; His look is a light that flashes through her, she is fused with Him; where He is all is beautiful. He is warmth to her soul, He lights everything; near Him, is it ever cold or dark to her? He is never absent; He is always within us, we think in Him, with Him, for Him. That, Minna, is how I love Him.'

'Whom?' said Minna, gripped by consuming jealousy.

'God!' replied Seraphitus, whose voice flashed upon their souls like a beacon light of freedom blazing from hill to hill—'God, who never betrays us! God, who does not desert us, but constantly fulfils our desires, and who alone can perennially satisfy His creatures with infinite and unmixed joys! God, who is never weary, and who only has smiles! God, ever new, who pours His treasures into the soul, who purifies it without bitterness, who is all harmony, all flame! God, who enters into us to blossom there, who fulfils all our aspirations, who never calls us to account if we are His, but gives Himself wholly, ravishes us, and expands and multiplies us in Himself—God, in short!

'Minna, I love you because you may be His! I love you because if you come to Him you will be mine.'

'Then lead me to Him,' said she, kneeling down. 'Take me by the hand; I will leave you no more.'

'Lead us, Seraphita,' cried Wilfrid vehemently, coming forward to kneel with Minna. 'Yes, you have made me thirst for the Light and thirst for the Word; I thirst with the love you have implanted in my heart, I will cherish your soul in mine; impart your Will, and I will do whatsoever you bid me do. If I may not win you, I will treasure every feeling that you can infuse into me as part of you! If I cannot be united to you but by my strength alone, I will cling as flame clings to what it consumes.—Speak!'

'Angel!' cried the incomprehensible being, with a look that seemed to enfold them in an azure mantle. 'Angel! heaven is thine inheritance!'

And a great silence fell after this cry, which rang in the souls of Wilfrid and Minna like the first chord of some celestial symphony.

'If you desire to train your feet to walk in the way that leads to heaven, remember that the first steps are rough,' said the suffering soul. 'God must be sought for His own sake. In that sense He is a jealous God, He will have you altogether His; but when you have given yourself to Him, He never abandons you. I will leave you the keys of the kingdom where His light shines, where you will everywhere be in the bosom of the Father, in the heart of the Bridegroom. No sentinel guards the gates; you can enter from any side; His palace, His treasures, His sceptre, nothing is forbidden; He says to all, "Take them freely!" But you must *will* to go thither. You must start as for a journey, leave your home, give up your plans, bid farewell to your friends—father, mother, sister, even the infant brother that cries—an eternal farewell, for you will never return, any more than martyrs bound for the stake returned to their homes; you must, in short, strip yourself of the feelings and possessions to which men cling; otherwise, you will not be wholly given up to your enterprise.

'Do for God what you would have done for your ambitious schemes, what you do when you take up an art, what you did when you loved a creature more than Him, or when you were studying some secret of human knowledge. Is not God Knowledge itself, Love itself, the Fount of all poetry? Is not His treasure a thing to covet? His treasure is inexhaustible, His poetry is infinite, His love unchangeable, His knowledge infallible and full of mysteries. Cling to nothing, then; He will give you All! Yes, in His heart you will find possessions beyond all compare with those you leave on earth.

'What I tell you is the truth. You will have His power, you will be allowed to use it as you use anything that belongs to your lover or your mistress.

'Alas! most men doubt, lack faith, will, and perseverance. Though some set out on the road, they presently look back and return. Few are they who know how to choose between these two extremes—to go or to stay; heaven or the muck-heap. All hesitate. Weakness leads to wandering, passion to evil ways, vice as a habit clogs the feet, and man makes no progress towards a better state.

'Every being passes a preliminary life in the Sphere of Instinct, labouring with endless toil to amass earthly treasures, only to recognise their futility at last. But how many times must we live through this first life before quitting it fit to begin another stage of trial in the Sphere of Abstractions, where the mind is exercised in false science, and the spirit is at last weary of human speech—for, matter being exhausted, the spirit prevails? How many forms must the being elect to heaven wear out, before he has learnt the preciousness of silence, and of the solitude whose star-strewn steppes are the floor of the spiritual world? It is after testing and trying the void that his eyes turn to the right path. Then there are other existences to be worn through or ever he may reach the road where the Light shines.

'Death marks a stage on this journey. After that, his experience is in a reversed order; it takes a whole life, perhaps, to acquire the virtues that are the antithesis of the errors in which he has previously lived.

'Thus, first we live the life of suffering, where torments make us thirst for love. Next comes the life of loving, where devotion to the creature teaches us devotion to the Creator; where the virtues of love, its thousand sacrifices, its angelic hope, its joys paid for by grief, its patience and resignation excite an appetite for things divine. After this comes the life during which we seek, in silence, the traces of the Word, and become humble and charitable. Then the life of high desire; finally, the life of prayer. There we find eternal sunshine; there are flowers, there is fruition!

'The qualities we acquire, and which slowly grow up in us, are the invisible bonds binding each of these existences to the next; the soul alone remembers them, since matter has no memory for spiritual things. The mind alone preserves a tradition of former states. This unbroken legacy of the past to the present, and of the present to the future, is the secret of human genius: some have the gift of form, some the gift of number, some the gift of harmony; these are all steps in the way to the Light. Yes, whoever possesses one of these gifts, touches the infinite at one spot.

'The Word, of which I have here uttered a few axioms, has been distributed over the earth, which has reduced it to powder, and infused it into its works, its doctrines, its poetry. If the tiniest speck of it shines on a work, you say, "This is great; this is true; this is sublime!" And that mere atom vibrates within you, giving you a foretaste of heaven. Thus, one has sickness, to divide him from the world; another has solitude, bringing him near to God; a third has poetry; in short, everything that throws you in on yourself, striking you and crushing you, is a ringing call from the Divine Sphere.

'When a being has traced the first furrow straight, it is enough to make the others by; one single profound thought, a voice once heard, an acute pang, a single echo that finds the Word in you, changes your soul for ever. Every road leads to God; hence you have many chances of finding Him if you walk straight on. When the happy day dawns that finds you with your foot on the road, starting on your pilgrimage, the earth knows no more of you, it understands you no more, you are no longer in harmony with it, it rejects you.

'Those who come to know these things, and who speak a few utterances of the true Word, find not where to lay their head; they are hunted like wild beasts, and often perish on the scaffold amid the rejoicing of the assembled populace; but angels open the gates of heaven to them. So your destination is a secret between you and God, as love is a secret between two hearts. You are as the hidden treasure over which men trample, greedy for gold, but not knowing that it is there.

'Your life is one of incessant activity. Each act has a purpose that tends to God, just as when you love, your acts and thoughts are full of the creature you love; but love and its joys, love and its sensual pleasures, is but an imperfect image of the infinite love that unites you to the Celestial Bridegroom. Every earthly joy is succeeded by anguish and dissatisfaction; for love to bring no disgust in its train, death must quench it at the fiercest, or ever you see the ashes; but God transforms our miseries into raptures, joy is multiplied by itself, it constantly increases, and knows no bounds.

'Thus, in the earthly life a transient love is ended by enduring tribulations; whereas, in the spiritual life, the tribulations of a day end in infinite joys. Your soul is for ever glad. You feel God close to you, in you; He gives a flavour of holiness to all things, He shines in your soul, He seals you with His sweetness, He weans you from the earth for your own sake, and makes you care

for it for His sake by suffering you to use His power. You do, in His name, the works He inspires you to do; you wipe away tears; you act for Him; you have nothing of your own; like Him, you love all creatures with inextinguishable love; you long to see them all marching towards Him, as a truly loving woman would fain see all the nations of the earth obedient to her Beloved.

'The last life—that in which all previous lives are summed up—is the life of prayer; in it every power is strung to the highest pitch, and its merits will open the gates of heaven to the being made perfect. Who can make you understand the greatness, the majesty, the power of prayer? Oh that my voice may be as thunder in your hearts, and that it may change them! Be now, forthwith, what you will become after trials. There are certain privileged beings—prophets, seers, evangelists, martyrs, all who suffer for the Word or who have declared it—these souls cross the human spheres at a single bound, and rise at once to prayer. So, too, do those who are consumed by the flame of faith. Be ye then such a daring pair! God accepts such temerity; He loves those who take Him with violence, He never rejects such as can force their way to Him. Understand this: Desire, the torrent of will, is so potent in a man, that a single jet forcibly emitted is enough to win anything, a single cry is often enough when uttered under the stress of faith. Be ye one of those beings, full of force, will, and love! Be victorious over the earth! Let the hunger and thirst for God possess you wholly; run to Him as the thirsting hart runs to the water-brook. Desire will give you wings; tears, the flowers of repentance, will fall like a heavenly baptism, whence your nature will come forth purified. From the bosom of these waters leap into prayer!

'Silence and meditation are efficacious means of entering on this road; God always reveals Himself to the

solitary and contemplative man. By this method the necessary separation is effected between matter, which has so long held you shrouded in darkness, and the spirit, which is born in you and gives you light, and day will dawn in your soul. Your broken heart receives the light which floods it; you no longer feel convictions, but dazzling certainties. The poet has expression, the sage meditates, the righteous man acts; but he who is on the frontier of the divine worlds prays, and his prayer is expression, meditation, and action all in one! Yes, his prayer contains everything, includes everything; it completes your nature by showing you the Spirit and the Way.

'Prayer is the fair and radiant daughter of all the human virtues, the arch connecting heaven and earth, the sweet companion that is alike the lion and the dove; and prayer will give you the key of heaven. As pure and as bold as innocence, as strong as all things are that are entire and single, this fair and invincible queen rests on the material world; she has taken possession of it; for, like the sun, she casts about it a sphere of light. The universe belongs to him who will, who can, who knows how to pray; but he must will, he must be able, and he must know how—in one word, he must have power, faith, and wisdom. And, indeed, when prayer is the outcome of so many trials, it is the consummation of all truth, of all power, of all emotion. The offspring of the laborious, slow, and persistent development of every natural property, and alive by the divine insufflation of the Word, she has enchantments in her hand, she is the crown of worship—neither material worship, which has its symbols, nor spiritual worship, which has its formulas, but worship of the divine order.

'We do not then say prayers; prayer lights up within us, and is a faculty which acts of itself: it acquires the vital activity which lifts it above all forms; it links the soul to God, and you are joined to Him as the root of a

tree is joined to the earth; the elements of things flow in your veins, and you live the life of the worlds themselves. Prayer bestows external conviction by enabling you to penetrate the world of matter through a cohesion of all your faculties with elementary substances; it bestows internal conviction by evolving your very essence, and mingling it with that of the spiritual spheres.

'To pray thus you must attain to absolute freedom from the flesh; you must be refined in the furnace to the purity of a diamond; for that perfect communion can only be achieved by absolute quiescence, the stilling of every storm. Yes, prayer, literally an aspiration of the soul set wholly free from the body, bears up every power, applying them all to the constant and persistent union of the visible and the invisible. When you possess the gift of praying without weariness, with love, assurance, force, and intelligence, your spiritualised nature soon attains to power. It passes beyond everything, like the whirlwind or the thunder, and partakes of the nature of God. You acquire alacrity of spirit; in one instant you can be present in every region; you are borne, like the Word itself, from one end of the world to the other. There is a harmony—you join in it; there is a light—you see it; there is a melody—its counterpart is in you. In that frame you will feel your intellect expanding, growing, and its insight reaching to prodigious distances; in fact, to the spirit, time and space are not. Distance and duration are proportions proper to matter; and spirit and matter have nothing in common.

'Although these things proceed in silence and stillness, without disturbance or external motion, everything is action in prayer; but vital action, devoid of all substantiality, refined like the motion of worlds into a pure and invisible force. It comes down from above like light, and gives life to the souls that lie in its rays, as nature lies in those of the sun. It everywhere resusci-

tates virtue, purifies and sanctifies action, peoples the solitude, and gives a foretaste of eternal bliss. When once you have known the ecstasy of the divine transport that comes of your internal struggles, there is no more to be said; when once you have grasped the sistrum on which to praise God, you will never lay it down. Hence the isolation in which angelic spirits dwell and their scorn of all that constitutes human joys.

'I say unto you, they are cut off from the number of those who must die; if they understand their speech, they no longer understand their ideas; they are amazed by their doings, by what is termed politics, by earthly laws and communities; to them there are no mysteries, nothing but truth. Those who have attained the degree at which their eyes can discern the gates of heaven, and who, without casting a single glance behind, without expressing a single regret, can look down upon the worlds and read their destinies,—those, I say, are silent, and wait and endure the last conflict; the last is the hardest, resignation is the supreme virtue. To dwell in exile and make no complaint, to have no care for things on earth and yet to smile, to belong to God and be left among men!

'Do you not plainly hear the voice that cries to you, "On! on!" Often in a celestial vision the angels descend and wrap you in song. Then you must see them soar back to the hive without a tear, without a murmur. To murmur would be to fail. Resignation is the fruit that ripens at the gate of heaven. How impressive and beautiful are the calm smile, the unruffled brow of the resigned creature! How radiant the light that adorns his face! Those who come within his range grow better; his look is penetrating and pathetic. He triumphs merely by his presence, more eloquent in his silence than the prophet in his speech. He stands alert like a faithful dog listening for his master.

Stronger than love, more eager than hope, greater than

faith, Resignation is the adorable maiden who, prone on the earth, clings for an instant to the palm she has won by leaving the print of her pure white feet; and when she is no more, men come in crowds and say, "Behold!" God preserves her there as an image, and at her feet creep all the shapes and species of animal life seeking their way. Now and again she shakes and sheds the light that emanates from her hair, and we see; she speaks, and we listen; and all say to one another, "A miracle!"

'Often she triumphs in the name of God; men in their terror deny her and put her to death; she lays down her sword and smiles at the stake after saving the nations!

'How many pardoned angels have stepped from martyrdom to heaven! Sinai and Golgotha are not here nor there. The angel is crucified everywhere, and in every sphere. Sighs go up to God from every world. The earth on which we live is one ear of the harvest; humanity is but a species in the vast field where flowers are grown for heaven.

'In short, God is everywhere the same, and it is easy everywhere to go up to Him by prayer.'

After these words, falling as from the lips of a second Hagar in the desert, and stirring the souls they pierced like the spears shot by the fiery word of Isaiah, the Being was silent to collect some little remaining strength. Neither Wilfrid nor Minna dared to speak. Then on a sudden HE sat up to die.

'Soul of the universe, oh God, whom I love for Thyself! Thou, Judge and Father, gauge a fervour that knows no limit but Thine infinite goodness! Impart to me Thine essence and Thy faculties, that I may be more truly Thine! Take me, that I may no longer be my own. If I am not duly purified, cast me back into the furnace. If I am not finely moulded, let me be made into some useful ploughshare or victorious sword. Grant me some glorious martyrdom to proclaim Thy

word. Even if Thou reject me, I will bless Thy justice. If my exceeding love may win in a moment what hard and patient labour may not obtain, snatch me up in Thy chariot of fire! Whether Thou shalt grant me to triumph or to suffer again, blessed be Thou! But if I suffer for Thee, is not that a triumph! Take me—seize, snatch, drag me away! Or, if Thou wilt, reject me! Thou art He whom I worship, and who can do no wrong.—Ah!' he cried after a pause, 'the bonds are breaking. Pure spirits, holy throng, come forth from the depths, fly over the surface of the luminous flood! The hour has struck, come, gather round me. We will sing at the gates of the sanctuary, our chants shall disperse the last lingering clouds. We will unite to hail the morn of everlasting day. Behold the dawn of the true Light! Why cannot I take my friends with me?—Farewell, poor earth, farewell!'

VII

THE ASSUMPTION

THIS last hymn was not uttered in words, nor expressed by gestures, nor by any of the signs which serve men as a means of communicating their thoughts, but as the soul speaks to itself; for, at the moment when Seraphita was revealed in her true nature, her ideas were no longer enslaved to human language. The vehemence of her last prayer had broken the bonds. Like a white dove, the soul hovered for a moment above this body, of which the exhausted materials were about to dissever.

The aspiration of this soul to heaven was so infectious, that Wilfrid and Minna failed to discern death as they saw the radiant spark of life.

They had fallen on their knees when Seraphitus

had turned to the dawn, and they were inspired by his ecstasy.

The fear of the Lord, who creates man anew and purges him of his dross, consumed their hearts. Their eyes were closed to the things of the earth, and opened to the glories of heaven.

Though surprised by the trembling before God which overcame some of those seers known to men as prophets, they still trembled, like them, when they found themselves within the circle where the glory of the Spirit was shining.

Then the veil of the flesh, which had hitherto hidden him from them, insensibly faded away, revealing the divine substance. They were left in the twilight of the dawn, whose pale light prepared them to see the true light, and to hear the living word without dying of it.

In this condition they both began to understand the immeasurable distances that divide the things of earth from the things of heaven.

The life on whose brink they stood, trembling and dazzled in a close embrace, as two children take refuge side by side to gaze at a conflagration—that Life gave no hold to the senses. The Spirit was above them; it shed fragrance without odour, and melody without the help of sound; here, where they knelt, there were neither surfaces, nor angles, nor atmosphere. They dared no longer question him nor gaze on him, but remained under his shadow, as under the burning rays of the tropical sun we dare not raise our eyes for fear of being blinded.

They felt themselves near to him, though they could not tell by what means they thus found themselves, as in a dream, on the border line of the visible and the invisible, nor how they had ceased to see the visible and perceived the invisible.

They said to themselves, 'If he should touch us, we shall die!' But the Spirit was in the infinite, and they

did not know that in the infinite time and space are not, that they were divided from him by gulfs, though apparently so near. Their souls not being prepared to receive a complete knowledge of the faculties of that life, they only perceived it darkly, apprehending it according to their weakness.

Otherwise, when the Living Word rang forth, of which the distant sound fell on their ear, its meaning entering into their soul as life enters into a body, a single tone of that Word would have swept them away, as a whirl of fire seizes a straw.

Thus they beheld only what their nature, upheld by the power of the Spirit, allowed them to see; they heard only so much as they were able to hear.

Still, in spite of these mitigations, they shuddered as they heard the voice of the suffering soul, the hymn of the spirit awaiting life, and crying out for it. That cry froze the very marrow in their bones.

The Spirit knocked at the sacred gate.

'What wilt thou?' asked a choir, whose voice rang through all the worlds.

'To go to God.'

'Hast thou conquered?'

'I have conquered the flesh by abstinence; I have vanquished false speech by silence; I have vanquished false knowledge by humility; I have vanquished pride by charity; I have vanquished the earth by love; I have paid my tribute of suffering; I am purified by burning for the faith; I have striven for life by prayer; I wait adoring, and I am resigned.'

But no reply came.

'The Lord be praised!' said the Spirit, believing himself rejected. His tears flowed, and fell in dew on the kneeling witnesses, who shuddered at the judgments of God.

On a sudden, the trumpets sounded for the victory of the Angel in this last test; their music filled space, like

a sound met by an echo; it rang through it, making the universe tremble. Wilfrid and Minna felt the world shrink under their feet. They shivered, shaken by the terrors of apprehending the mystery that was to be accomplished.

There was, in fact, a vast stir, as though the eternal legions were forming to march, and gathering in spiral order. The worlds spun round, like clouds swept away by a mad whirlwind. It was all in a moment. The veils were rent; they saw far above them, as it were, a star immeasurably brighter than the brightest star in the skies; it fell from its place like a thunderbolt, still flashing like the lightning, paling in its flight all that they had ever hitherto thought to be light.

This was the messenger bearing the good tidings, and the plume in his helmet was a flame of life. He left behind him a wake, filled up at once by the waves of the luminous flood he passed through.

He bore a palm and a sword; with the palm he touched the Spirit, and it was transfigured; its white wings spread without a sound.

At the communication of the Light, which changed the Spirit into a seraph, the garb of heavenly armour that clothed its glorious form, shed such radiance that the two seers were blinded. And, like the three apostles to whose sight Jesus appeared, Wilfrid and Minna were conscious of the burthen of their bodies, which hindered them from complete and unclouded intuition of the Word and the True Life.

They saw the nakedness of their souls, and could measure their lack of brightness by comparison with the halo of the seraph, in which they stood as a shameful spot. They felt an ardent desire to rush back into the mire of the universe, to endure trial there, so as to be able some day to utter at the sacred gate the answer spoken by the glorified Spirit.

That seraph knelt down at the gate of the sanctuary,

which he could at last see face to face, and said, pointing to them—

'Grant them to see more clearly. They will love the Lord, and proclaim His Word.'

In answer to this prayer, a veil fell. Whether the unknown power that laid a hand on the two seers did for a moment annihilate their physical bodies, or whether it released their spirit to soar free, they were aware of a separation in themselves of the pure from the impure.

Then the seraph's tears rose round them in the form of a vapour which hid the lower worlds from their eyes, and wrapped them round and carried them away, and gave them oblivion of earthly meanings, and the power of understanding the sense of divine things. The True Light appeared; it shed light on all creation, which, to them, looked barren indeed when they saw the source whence the worlds, earthly, spiritual, and divine, derive motion.

Each world had a centre to which tended every atom of the sphere; these worlds were themselves each an atom tending to the centre of their species. Each species had its centre in the vast celestial region that is in communion with the inexhaustible and flaming *motor power of all that exists*. Thus, from the most vast to the smallest of the worlds, and from the smallest sphere to the minutest atom of the creation that constitutes it, each thing was an individual, and yet all was one.

What, then, was the purpose of the Being, immutable in Essence and Faculty, but able to communicate them without loss, able to manifest them as phenomena without separating them from Himself, and causing everything outside Himself to be a creation immutable in its essence and mutable in its form? The two guests bidden to this high festival could only see the order and arrangement of beings, and wonder at their immediate

ends. None but angels could go beyond that, and know the means and understand the purpose.

But that which those two chosen ones could contemplate, and of which they carried away the evidence to be a light to their souls for ever after, was the certainty of the action of worlds and beings, and a knowledge of the effort with which they all tend to a final result. They heard the various parts of the infinite forming a living melody; and at each beat, when the concord made itself felt as a deep expiration, the worlds, carried on by this unanimous motion, bowed to the Omnipotent One, who in His unapproachable centre made all things issue from Him and return to Him. This ceaseless alternation of voices and silence seemed to be the rhythm of the holy hymn that was echoed and sustained from age to age.

Wilfrid and Minna now understood some of the mysterious words of the being who on earth had appeared to them under the form which was intelligible to each—Seraphitus to one, Seraphita to the other—seeing that here all was homogeneous. Light gave birth to melody, and melody to light; colours were both light and melody; motion was number endowed by the Word; in short, everything was at once sonorous, diaphanous, and mobile; so that, everything existing in everything else, extension knew no limits, and the angels could traverse it everywhere to the utmost depths of the infinite.

They saw then how puerile were the human sciences of which they had heard. Before them lay a view without any horizon, an abyss into which ardent craving invited them to plunge; but burthened with their hapless bodies, they had the desire without the power.

The seraph lightly spread his wings to take his flight, and did not look back at them—he had nothing now in common with the earth.

He sprang upwards; the vast span of his dazzling pinions covered the two seers like a beneficent shade, allowing them to raise their eyes and see him borne away

in his glory escorted by the rejoicing archangel. He mounted like a beaming sun rising from the bosom of the waters; but, more happy he than the day star, and destined to more glorious ends, he was not bound, like inferior creatures, to a circular orbit; he followed the direct line of the infinite, tending undeviatingly to the central one, to be lost there in life eternal, and to absorb into his faculties and into his essence the power of rejoicing through love and the gift of comprehending through wisdom.

The spectacle that was then suddenly unveiled to the eyes of the two seers overpowered them by its vastness, for they felt like atoms whose smallness was comparable only to the minutest fraction which infinite divisibility allows man to conceive of, brought face to face with the infinitely numerous which God alone can contemplate as He contemplates Himself.

What humiliation and what greatness in those two points, strength and love, which the seraph's first desire had placed as two links uniting the immensity of the inferior universe to the immensity of the superior universe! They understood the invisible bonds by which material worlds are attached to the spiritual worlds. As they recalled the stupendous efforts of the greatest human minds, they discerned the principle of melody as they heard the songs of heaven which gave them all the sensations of colour, perfume, and thought, and reminded them of the innumerable details of all the creations, as an earthly song can revive the slenderest memories of love.

Strung by the excessive exaltation of their faculties to a pitch for which there is no word in any language, for a moment they were suffered to glance into the divine sphere. There all was gladness. Myriads of angels winged their way with one consent and without confusion, all alike but all different, as simple as the wild rose, as vast as worlds.

Wilfrid and Minna did not see them come nor go; they suddenly pervaded the infinite with their presence, as stars appear in the unfathomable ether. The blaze of all their diadems flashed into light in space, as the heavenly fire is lighted when the day rises among mountains. Waves of light fell from their hair, and their movements gave rise to undulating throbs like the dancing waves of a phosphorescent sea.

The two seers could discern the seraph as a darker object amid deathless legions, whose wings were as the mighty plumage of a forest swept by the breeze. And then, as though all the arrows of a quiver were shot off at once, the spirits dispelled with a breath every vestige of his former shape; as the seraph mounted higher he was purified, and ere long he was no more than a filmy image of what they had seen when he was first transfigured—lines of fire with no shadow. Up and up, receiving a fresh gift at each circle, while the sign of his election was transmitted to the highest heaven, whither he mounted purer and purer.

None of the voices ceased; the hymn spread in all its modes—

'Hail to him who rises to life! Come, flower of the worlds, diamond passed through the fire of affliction, pearl without spot, desire without flesh, new link between earth and heaven, be thou Light! Conquering spirit, queen of the world, fly to take thy crown; victorious over the earth, receive thy diadem! Be one of us!'

The angel's virtues reappeared in all their beauty. His first longing for heaven was seen in the grace of tender infancy. His deeds adorned him with brightness like constellations; his acts of faith blazed like the hyacinth of the skies, the hue of the stars. Charity decked him with oriental pearls, treasured tears. Divine love bowered him in roses, and his pious resignation by its whiteness divested him of every trace of earthliness.

Soon, to their eyes, he was no more than a speck of

flame, growing more and more intense, its motion lost in the melodious acclamations that hailed his arrival in heaven.

The celestial voices made the two exiles weep.

Suddenly the silence of death spread like a solemn veil from the highest to the lowest sphere, throwing Wilfrid and Minna into unutterable expectancy. At that instant the seraph was lost in the heart of the sanctuary, where he received the gift of eternal life.

Then they were aware of an impulse of intense adoration, which filled them with rapture mingled with awe. They felt that every being had fallen prostrate in the divine spheres, in the spiritual spheres, and in the worlds of darkness. The angels bent the knee to do honour to his glory, the spirits bent the knee to testify to their eagerness, and in the abyss all knelt, shuddering with awe.

A mighty shout of joy broke out, as a choked spring breaks forth again, tossing up its thousands of flower-like jets, mirroring the sun which turns the sparkling drops to diamond and pearl, at the instant when the seraph emerged, a blaze of light, crying :

'Eternal! Eternal! Eternal!'

The worlds heard him and acknowledged him; he became one with them as God is, and took possession of the infinite.

The seven divine worlds were aroused by his voice and answered him.

At this instant there was a great rush, as if whole stars were purified and went up in dazzling glory to be eternal. Perhaps the seraph's first duty was to call all creations filled with the Word to come to God.

But the hallelujah was already dying away in the ears of Wilfrid and Minna, like the last waves of dying music. The glories of heaven were already vanishing, like the hues of a setting sun amid curtains of purple and gold.

Death and impurity were repossessing themselves of their prey.

As they resumed the bondage of the flesh from which their spirit had for a moment been released by a sublime trance, the two mortals felt as on awaking in the morning from a night of splendid dreams, of which reminiscences float in the brain, though the senses have no knowledge of them, and human language would fail to express them. The blackness of the limbo into which they fell was the sphere where the sun of visible worlds shines.

'We must go down again,' said Wilfrid to Minna.

'We will do as he bids us,' replied she. 'Having seen the worlds moving on towards God, we know the right way.—Our starry diadems are above!'

They fell into the abyss, into the dust of the lower worlds, and suddenly saw the earth as it were a crypt, of which the prospect was made clear to them by the light they brought back in their souls, for it still wrapped them in a halo, and through it they still vaguely heard the vanishing harmonies of heaven. This was the spectacle which of old fell on the mind's eye of the prophets. Ministers of various religions, all calling themselves true, kings consecrated by force and fear, warriors and conquerors sharing the nations, learned men and rich lording it over a refractory and suffering populace whom they trampled under foot,—these were all attended by their followers and their women, all were clad in robes of gold, silver, and azure, covered with pearls and gems torn from the bowels of the earth or from the depths of the sea by the perennial toil of sweating and blaspheming humanity. But in the eyes of the exiles this wealth and splendour, harvested with blood, were but filthy rags.

'What do ye here in motionless ranks?' asked Wilfrid.

They made no answer.

'What do ye here in motionless ranks?'

But they made no answer.

Wilfrid laid his hands on them and shouted—

'What do ye here in motionless ranks?'

By a common impulse they all opened their robes and showed him their bodies, dried up, eaten by worms, corrupt, falling to dust, and consumed by horrible diseases. 'Ye lead the nations to death,' said Wilfrid; 'ye have defiled the earth, perverted the Word, prostituted justice. Ye have eaten the herb of the field, and now ye would kill the lambs! Do ye think that there is justification in showing your wounds? I shall warn those of my brethren who still can hear the Voice, that they may slake their thirst at the springs that you have hidden.'

'Let us save our strength for prayer,' said Minna. 'It is not your mission to be a prophet, nor a redeemer, nor an evangelist. We are as yet only on the margin of the lowest sphere; let us strive to cleave through space on the pinions of prayer.'

'You are my sole love!'

'You are my sole strength!'

'We have had a glimpse of the higher mysteries; we are, each to the other, the only creatures here below with whom joy and grief are conceivable. Come then, we will pray; we know the road, we will walk in it.'

'Give me your hand,' said the girl. 'If we always walk together, the path will seem less rough and not so long.'

'Only with you,' said the young man, 'could I traverse that vast desert without allowing myself to repine.'

'And we will go to heaven together!' said she.

The clouds fell, forming a dark canopy. Suddenly the lovers found themselves kneeling by a dead body,

which old David was protecting from prying curiosity, and insisted on burying with his own hands.

Outside, the first summer of the nineteenth century was in all its glory; the lovers fancied they could hear a voice in the sunbeams. They breathed heavenly perfume from the new-born flowers, and said as they took each other by the hand—

'The vast ocean that gleams out there is an image of that we saw above!'

'Whither are you going?' asked Pastor Becker.

'We mean to go to God,' said they. 'Come with us, father.'

GENEVA AND PARIS,
December 1833—*November* 1835.

LOUIS LAMBERT

DEDICATION :

'*Et nunc et semper dilectæ dicatum.*'

LOUIS LAMBERT was born in 1797 at Montoire, a little town in the Vendômois, where his father owned a tannery of no great magnitude, and intended that his son should succeed him; but his precocious bent for study modified the paternal decision. For, indeed, the tanner and his wife adored Louis, their only child, and never contradicted him in anything.

At the age of five Louis had begun by reading the Old and New Testaments; and these two Books, including so many books, had sealed his fate. Could that childish imagination understand the mystical depths of the Scriptures? Could it so early follow the flight of the Holy Spirit across the worlds? Or was it merely attracted by the romantic touches which abound in those Oriental poems! Our narrative will answer these questions to some readers.

One thing resulted from this first reading of the Bible: Louis went all over Montoire begging for books, and he obtained them by those winning ways peculiar to children, which no one can resist. While devoting himself to these studies under no sort of guidance, he reached the age of ten.

At that period substitutes for the army were scarce; rich families secured them long beforehand to have them ready when the lots were drawn. The poor tanner's



Quadrangle of the College of Vendôme where Balzac was educated

modest fortune did not allow of their purchasing a substitute for their son, and they saw no means allowed by law for evading the conscription but that of making him a priest; so, in 1807, they sent him to his maternal uncle, the parish priest of Mer, another small town on the Loire, not far from Blois. This arrangement at once satisfied Louis's passion for knowledge, and his parents' wish not to expose him to the dreadful chances of war; and, indeed, his taste for study and precocious intelligence gave grounds for hoping that he might rise to high fortunes in the Church.

After remaining for about three years with his uncle, an old and not uncultured Oratorian, Louis left him early in 1811 to enter the College at Vendôme, where he was maintained at the cost of Madame de Staël.

Lambert owed the favour and patronage of this celebrated lady to chance, or shall we not say to Providence, who can smooth the path of forlorn genius. To us, indeed, who do not see below the surface of human things, such vicissitudes, of which we find many examples in the lives of great men, appear to be merely the result of physical phenomena; to most biographers the head of a man of genius rises above the herd as some noble plant in the fields attracts the eye of the botanist by its splendour. This comparison may well be applied to Louis Lambert's adventure; he was accustomed to spend the time allowed him by his uncle for holidays at his father's house; but instead of indulging, after the manner of schoolboys, in the sweets of the delightful *far niente* that tempts us at every age, he set out every morning with part of a loaf and his books, and went to read and meditate in the woods, to escape his mother's remonstrances, for she believed such persistent study to be injurious. How admirable is a mother's instinct! From that time reading was in Louis a sort of appetite which nothing could satisfy; he devoured books of every kind, feeding indiscriminately on religious works,

history, philosophy, and physics. He has told me that he found indescribable delight in reading dictionaries for lack of other books, and I readily believed him. What scholar has not many a time found pleasure in seeking the probable meaning of some unknown word? The analysis of a word, its physiognomy and history, would be to Lambert matter for long dreaming. But these were not the instinctive dreams by which a boy accustoms himself to the phenomena of life, steels himself to every moral or physical perception—an involuntary education which subsequently brings forth fruit both in the understanding and character of a man; no, Louis mastered the facts, and he accounted for them after seeking out both the principle and the end with the mother wit of a savage. Indeed, from the age of fourteen, by one of those startling freaks in which nature sometimes indulges, and which proved how anomalous was his temperament, he would utter quite simply ideas of which the depth was not revealed to me till a long time after.

'Often,' he has said to me when speaking of his studies, 'often have I made the most delightful voyage, floating on a word down the abyss of the past, like an insect embarked on a blade of grass tossing on the ripples of a stream. Starting from Greece, I would get to Rome, and traverse the whole extent of modern ages. What a fine book might be written of the life and adventures of a word! It has, of course, received various stamps from the occasions on which it has served its purpose; it has conveyed different ideas in different places; but is it not still grander to think of it under the three aspects of soul, body, and motion? Merely to regard it in the abstract, apart from its functions, its effects, and its influence, is enough to cast one into an ocean of meditations? Are not most words coloured by the idea they represent? Then, to whose genius are they due? If it takes great intelli-

gence to create a word, how old may human speech be? The combination of letters, their shapes, and the look they give to the word, are the exact reflection, in accordance with the character of each nation, of the unknown beings whose traces survive in us.

'Who can philosophically explain the transition from sensation to thought, from thought to word, from the word to its hieroglyphic presentment, from hieroglyphics to the alphabet, from the alphabet to written language, of which the eloquent beauty resides in a series of images, classified by rhetoric, and forming, in a sense, the hieroglyphics of thought? Was it not the ancient mode of representing human ideas as embodied in the forms of animals that gave rise to the shapes of the first signs used in the East for writing down language? Then has it not left its traces by tradition on our modern languages, which have all seized some remnant of the primitive speech of nations, a majestic and solemn tongue whose grandeur and solemnity decrease as communities grow old; whose sonorous tones ring in the Hebrew Bible, and still are noble in Greece, but grow weaker under the progress of successive phases of civilisation?

'Is it to this time-honoured spirit that we owe the mysteries lying buried in every human word? In the word *True* do we not discern a certain imaginary rectitude? Does not the compact brevity of its sound suggest a vague image of chaste nudity and the simplicity of Truth in all things? The syllable seems to me singularly crisp and fresh.

'I chose the formula of an abstract idea on purpose, not wishing to illustrate the case by a word which should make it too obvious to the apprehension, as the word *Flight* for instance, which is a direct appeal to the senses.

'But is it not so with every root word? They all are stamped with a living power that comes from the soul, and which they restore to the soul through the

mysterious and wonderful action and reaction between thought and speech. Might we not speak of it as a lover who finds on his mistress's lips as much love as he gives? Thus, by their mere physiognomy, words call to life in our brain the beings which they serve to clothe. Like all beings, there is but one place where their properties are at full liberty to act and develop. But the subject demands a science to itself perhaps!'

And he would shrug his shoulders, as much as to say, 'But we are too high and too low!'

Louis's passion for reading had on the whole been very well satisfied. The curé of Mer had two or three thousand volumes. This treasure had been derived from the plunder committed during the Revolution in the neighbouring châteaux and abbeys. As a priest who had taken the oath, the worthy man had been able to choose the best books from among these precious libraries, which were sold by the pound. In three years Louis Lambert had assimilated the contents of all the books in his uncle's library that were worth reading. The process of absorbing ideas by means of reading had become in him a very strange phenomenon. His eye took in six or seven lines at once, and his mind grasped the sense with a swiftness as remarkable as that of his eye; sometimes even one word in a sentence was enough to enable him to seize the gist of the matter.

His memory was prodigious. He remembered with equal exactitude the ideas he had derived from reading, and those which had occurred to him in the course of meditation or conversation. Indeed, he had every form of memory—for places, for names, for words, things, and faces. He not only recalled any object at will, but he saw them in his mind, situated, lighted, and coloured as he had originally seen them. And this power he could exert with equal effect with regard to the most abstract efforts of the intellect. He could remember, as he said, not merely the position of a sentence in the

book where he had met with it, but the frame of mind he had been in at remote dates. Thus his was the singular privilege of being able to retrace in memory the whole life and progress of his mind, from the ideas he had first acquired to the last thought evolved in it, from the most obscure to the clearest. His brain, accustomed in early youth to the mysterious mechanism by which human faculties are concentrated, drew from this rich treasury endless images full of life and freshness, on which he fed his spirit during those lucid spells of contemplation.

'Whenever I wish it,' said he to me in his own language, to which a fund of remembrance gave precocious originality, 'I can draw a veil over my eyes. Then I suddenly see within me a camera obscura, where natural objects are reproduced in purer forms than those under which they first appeared to my external sense.'

At the age of twelve his imagination, stimulated by the perpetual exercise of his faculties, had developed to a point which permitted him to have such precise concepts of things which he knew only from reading about them, that the image stamped on his mind could not have been clearer if he had actually seen them, whether this was by a process of analogy or that he was gifted with a sort of second sight by which he could command all nature.

'When I read the story of the battle of Austerlitz,' said he to me one day, 'I saw every incident. The roar of the cannon, the cries of the fighting men rang in my ears, and made my inmost self quiver; I could smell the powder; I heard the clatter of horses and the voices of men; I looked down on the plain where armed nations were in collision, just as if I had been on the heights of Santon. The scene was as terrifying as a passage from the Apocalypse.' On the occasions when he brought all his powers into play, and in some degree lost consciousness of his physical existence, and lived on only by the

remarkable energy of his mental powers, whose sphere was enormously expanded, he left space behind him, to use his own words.

But I will not here anticipate the intellectual phases of his life. Already, in spite of myself, I have reversed the order in which I ought to tell the history of this man, who transferred all his activities to thinking, as others throw all their life into action.

A strong bias drew his mind to mystical studies.

'*Abyssus abyssum*,' he would say. 'Our spirit is abysmal and loves the abyss. In childhood, manhood, and old age we are always eager for mysteries in whatever form they present themselves.'

This predilection was disastrous; if indeed his life can be measured by ordinary standards, or if we may gauge another's happiness by our own or by social notions. This taste for the 'things of heaven,' another phrase he was fond of using, this *mens divinior*, was due perhaps to the influence produced on his mind by the first books he read at his uncle's. Saint Theresa and Madame Guyon were a sequel to the Bible; they had the firstfruits of his manly intelligence, and accustomed him to those swift reactions of the soul of which ecstasy is at once the result and the means. This line of study, this peculiar taste, elevated his heart, purified, ennobled it, gave him an appetite for the divine nature, and suggested to him the almost womanly refinement of feeling which is instinctive in great men; perhaps their sublime superiority is no more than the desire to devote themselves which characterises woman, only transferred to the greatest things.

As a result of these early impressions, Louis passed immaculate through his school life; this beautiful virginity of the senses naturally resulted in the richer fervour of his blood, and in increased faculties of mind.

The Baroness de Staël, forbidden to come within forty leagues of Paris, spent several months of her banishment

on an estate near Vendôme. One day, when out walking, she met on the skirts of the park the tanner's son, almost in rags, and absorbed in reading. The book was a translation of *Heaven and Hell.* At that time Monsieur Saint-Martin, Monsieur de Gence, and a few other French or half German writers were almost the only persons in the French Empire to whom the name of Swedenborg was known. Madame de Staël, greatly surprised, took the book from him with the roughness she affected in her questions, looks, and manners, and with a keen glance at Lambert,—

'Do you understand all this?' she asked.

'Do you pray to God?' said the child.

'Why? yes!

'And do you understand Him?'

The Baroness was silent for a moment; then she sat down by Lambert, and began to talk to him. Unfortunately, my memory, though retentive, is far from being so trustworthy as my friend's, and I have forgotten the whole of the dialogue excepting those first words.

Such a meeting was of a kind to strike Madame de Staël very greatly; on her return home she said but little about it, notwithstanding an effusiveness which in her became mere loquacity; but it evidently occupied her thoughts.

The only person now living who preserves any recollection of the incident, and whom I catechised to be informed of what few words Madame de Staël had let drop, could with difficulty recall these words spoken by the Baroness as describing Lambert, 'He is a real seer.'

Louis failed to justify in the eyes of the world the high hopes he had inspired in his protectress. The transient favour she showed him was regarded as a feminine caprice, one of the fancies characteristic of artist souls. Madame de Staël determined to save Louis

Lambert alike from serving the Emperor or the Church, and to preserve him for the glorious destiny which, she thought, awaited him; for she made him out to be a second Moses snatched from the waters. Before her departure she instructed a friend of hers, Monsieur de Corbigny, to send her Moses in due course to the High School at Vendôme; then she probably forgot him.

Having entered this college at the age of fourteen, early in 1811, Lambert would leave it at the end of 1814, when he had finished the course of Philosophy. I doubt whether during the whole time he ever heard a word of his benefactress—if indeed it was the act of a benefactress to pay for a lad's schooling for three years without a thought of his future prospects, after diverting him from a career in which he might have found happiness. The circumstances of the time, and Louis Lambert's character, may to a great extent absolve Madame de Staël for her thoughtlessness and her generosity. The gentleman who was to have kept up communications between her and the boy left Blois just at the time when Louis passed out of the college. The political events that ensued were then a sufficient excuse for this gentleman's neglect of the Baroness's protégé. The authoress of *Corinne* heard no more of her little Moses.

A hundred louis, which she placed in the hands of Monsieur de Corbigny, who died, I believe, in 1812, was not a sufficiently large sum to leave lasting memories in Madame de Staël, whose excitable nature found ample pasture during the vicissitudes of 1814 and 1815, which absorbed all her interest.

At this time Louis Lambert was at once too proud and too poor to go in search of a patroness who was travelling all over Europe. However, he went on foot from Blois to Paris in the hope of seeing her, and arrived, unluckily, on the very day of her death. Two letters from Lambert to the Baroness remained unan-

swered. The memory of Madame de Staël's good intentions with regard to Louis remains, therefore, only in some few young minds, struck, as mine was, by the strangeness of the story.

No one who had not gone through the training at our college could understand the effect usually made on our minds by the announcement that a 'new boy' had arrived, or the impression that such an adventure as Louis Lambert's was calculated to produce.

And here a little information must be given as to the primitive administration of this institution, originally half-military and half-monastic, to explain the new life which there awaited Lambert. Before the Revolution, the Oratorians, devoted, like the Society of Jesus, to the education of youth—succeeding the Jesuits, in fact, in certain of their establishments—had various provincial houses, of which the most famous were the colleges of Vendôme, of Tournon, of la Flèche, Pont-Levoy, Sorrèze, and Juilly. That at Vendôme, like the others, I believe, turned out a certain number of cadets for the army. The abolition of educational bodies, decreed by the Convention, had but little effect on the college at Vendôme. When the first crisis had blown over, the authorities recovered possession of their buildings; certain Oratorians, scattered about the country, came back to the college and re-opened it under the old rules, with the habits, practices, and customs which gave this school a character with which I have seen nothing at all comparable in any that I have visited since I left that establishment.

Standing in the heart of the town, on the little river Loir which flows under its walls, the college possesses extensive precincts, carefully enclosed by walls, and including all the buildings necessary for an institution on that scale: a chapel, a theatre, an infirmary, a bakehouse, gardens, and water supply. This college is the most celebrated home of learning in all the central provinces,

and receives pupils from them and from the colonies. Distance prohibits any frequent visits from parents to their children.

The rule of the House forbids holidays away from it. Once entered there, a pupil never leaves till his studies are finished. With the exception of walks taken under the guidance of the Fathers, everything is calculated to give the School the benefit of conventual discipline; in my day the tawse was still a living memory, and the classical leather strap played its terrible part with all the honours. The punishments originally invented by the Society of Jesus, as alarming to the moral as to the physical man, were still in force in all the integrity of the original code.

Letters to parents were obligatory on certain days, so was confession. Thus our sins and our sentiments were all according to pattern. Everything bore the stamp of monastic rule. I well remember, among other relics of the ancient order, the inspection we went through every Sunday. We were all in our best, placed in file like soldiers to await the arrival of the two inspectors who, attended by the tutors and the tradesmen, examined us from the three points of view of dress, health, and morals.

The two or three hundred pupils lodged in the establishment were divided, according to ancient custom, into the *minimes* (the smallest), the little boys, the middle boys, and the big boys. The division of the *minimes* included the eighth and seventh classes; the little boys formed the sixth, fifth, and fourth; the middle boys were classed as third and second; and the first class comprised the senior students — of philosophy, rhetoric, the higher mathematics, and chemistry. Each of these divisions had its own building, class-rooms, and play-ground, in the large common precincts on to which the class-rooms opened, and beyond which was the refectory.

This dining-hall, worthy of an ancient religious Order, accommodated all the school. Contrary to the

usual practice in educational institutions, we were allowed to talk at our meals, a tolerant Oratorian rule which enabled us to exchange plates according to our taste. This gastronomical barter was always one of the chief pleasures of our college life. If one of the 'middle' boys at the head of his table wished for a helping of lentils instead of dessert—for we had dessert—the offer was passed down from one to another: 'Dessert for lentils!' till some other epicure had accepted; then the plate of lentils was passed up to the bidder from hand to hand, and the plate of dessert returned by the same road. Mistakes were never made. If several identical offers were made, they were taken in order, and the formula would be, 'Lentils number one for dessert number one.' The tables were very long; our incessant barter kept everything moving; we transacted it with amazing eagerness; and the chatter of three hundred lads, the bustling to and fro of the servants employed in changing the plates, setting down the dishes, handing the bread, with the tours of inspection of the masters, made this refectory at Vendôme a scene unique in its way, and the amazement of visitors.

To make our life more tolerable, deprived as we were of all communication with the outer world and of family affection, we were allowed to keep pigeons and to have gardens. Our two or three hundred pigeon-houses, with a thousand birds nesting all round the outer wall, and above thirty garden plots, were a sight even stranger than our meals. But a full account of the peculiarities which made the college at Vendôme a place unique in itself and fertile in reminiscences to those who spent their boyhood there, would be weariness to the reader. Which of us all but remembers with delight, notwithstanding the bitterness of learning, the eccentric pleasures of that cloistered life? The sweetmeats purchased by stealth in the course of our walks, permission obtained to play cards and devise theatrical performances during the

holidays, such tricks and freedom as were necessitated by our seclusion ; then, again, our military band, a relic of the cadets ; our academy, our chaplain, our Father professors, and all our games permitted or prohibited, as the case might be ; the cavalry charges on stilts, the long slides made in winter, the clatter of our clogs ; and, above all, the trading transactions with 'the shop' set up in the courtyard itself.

This shop was kept by a sort of cheap-jack, of whom big and little boys could procure—according to his prospectus—boxes, stilts, tools, Jacobin pigeons, and Nuns, Mass-books—an article in small demand—penknives, paper, pens, pencils, ink of all colours, balls and marbles ; in short, the whole catalogue of the most treasured possessions of boys, including everything from sauce for the pigeons we were obliged to kill off, to the earthenware pots in which we set aside the rice from supper to be eaten at next morning's breakfast. Which of us is so unhappy as to have forgotten how his heart beat at the sight of this booth, open periodically during play-hours on Sundays, to which we went, each in his turn, to spend his little pocket-money ; while the smallness of the sum allowed by our parents for these minor pleasures required us to make a choice among all the objects that appealed so strongly to our desires ? Did ever a young wife, to whom her husband, during the first days of happiness, hands, twelve times a years, a purse of gold, the budget of her personal fancies, dream of so many different purchases, each of which would absorb the whole sum, as we imagined possible on the eve of the first Sunday in each month ? For six francs during one night we owned every delight of that inexhaustible shop ! and during Mass every response we chanted was mixed up in our minds with our secret calculations. Which of us all can recollect ever having had a sou left to spend on the Sunday following ? And which of us but obeyed the instinctive law of social existence by pitying, helping, and

despising those pariahs who, by the avarice or poverty of their parents, found themselves penniless?

Any one who forms a clear idea of this huge college, with its monastic buildings in the heart of a little town, and the four plots in which we were distributed as by a monastic rule, will easily conceive of the excitement that we felt at the arrival of a new boy, a passenger suddenly embarked on the ship. No young duchess, on her first appearance at Court, was ever more spitefully criticised than the new boy by the youths in his division. Usually during the evening play-hour before prayers, those sycophants who were accustomed to ingratiate themselves with the Fathers who took it in turns two and two for a week to keep an eye on us, would be the first to hear on trustworthy authority: 'There will be a new boy to-morrow!' and then suddenly the shout, 'A New Boy!—A New Boy!' rang through the courts. We hurried up to crowd round the superintendent and pester him with questions—

'Where was he coming from? What was his name? Which class would he be in?' and so forth.

Louis Lambert's advent was the subject of a romance worthy of the *Arabian Nights*. I was in the fourth class at the time—among the little boys. Our house-masters were two men whom we called Fathers from habit and tradition, though they were not priests. In my time there were indeed but three genuine Oratorians to whom this title legitimately belonged; in 1814 they all left the college, which had gradually become secularised, to find occupation about the altar in various country parishes, like the curé of Mer.

Father Haugoult, the master for the week, was not a bad man, but of very moderate attainments, and he lacked the tact which is indispensable for discerning the different characters of children, and graduating their punishment to their powers of resistance. Father Haugoult, then, began very obligingly to communicate

to his pupils the wonderful events which were to end on the morrow in the advent of the most singular of 'new boys.' Games were at an end. All the children came round in silence to hear the story of Louis Lambert, discovered, like an aërolite, by Madame de Staël, in a corner of the wood. Monsieur Haugoult had to tell us all about Madame de Staël; that evening she seemed to me ten feet high; I saw at a later time the picture of Corinne, in which Gérard represents her as so tall and handsome; and, alas! the woman painted by my imagination so far transcended this, that the real Madame de Staël fell at once in my estimation, even after I read her book of really masculine power, *De l'Allemagne*.

But Lambert at that time was an even greater wonder. Monsieur Mareschal, the headmaster, after examining him, had thought of placing him among the senior boys. It was Louis's ignorance of Latin that placed him so low as the fourth class, but he would certainly leap up a class every year; and, as a remarkable exception, he was to be one of the 'Academy.' *Proh pudor!* we were to have the honour of counting among the 'little boys' one whose coat was adorned with the red ribbon displayed by the 'Academicians' of Vendôme. These Academicians enjoyed distinguished privileges; they often dined at the director's table, and held two literary meetings annually, at which we were all present to hear their elucubrations. An Academician was a great man in embryo. And if every Vendôme scholar would speak the truth, he would confess that, in later life, an Academician of the great French Academy seemed to him far less remarkable than the stupendous boy who wore the cross and the imposing red ribbon which were the insignia of our 'Academy.'

It was very unusual to be one of that illustrious body before attaining to the second class, for the Academicians were expected to hold public meetings every Thursday

during the holidays, and to read tales in verse or prose, epistles, essays, tragedies, dramas — compositions far above the intelligence of the lower classes. I long treasured the memory of a story called the 'Green Ass,' which was, I think, the masterpiece of this unknown Society. In the fourth, and an Academician! This boy of fourteen, a poet already, the protégé of Madame de Staël, a coming genius, said Father Haugoult, was to be one of us! a wizard, a youth capable of writing a composition or a translation while we were being called in to lessons, and of learning his lessons by reading them through but once. Louis Lambert bewildered all our ideas. And Father Haugoult's curiosity and impatience to see this new boy added fuel to our excited fancy.

'If he has pigeons, he can have no pigeon-house; there is not room for another. Well, it cannot be helped,' said one boy, since famous as an agriculturist.

'Who will sit next to him?' said another.

'Oh, I wish I might be his chum!' cried an enthusiast.

In school language, the word here rendered chum—*faisant*, or, in some schools, *copin*—expressed a fraternal sharing of the joys and evils of your childish existence, a community of interests that was fruitful of squabbling and making friends again, a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive. It is strange, but never in my time did I know brothers who were chums. If man lives by his feelings, he thinks perhaps that he will make his life the poorer if he merges an affection of his own choosing in a natural tie.

The impression made upon me by Father Haugoult's harangue that evening is one of the most vivid reminiscences of my childhood; I can compare it with nothing but my first reading of *Robinson Crusoe.* Indeed, I owe to my recollection of these prodigious impressions an observation that may perhaps be new as to the different sense attached to words by each hearer. The

word in itself has no final meaning; we affect a word more than it affects us; its value is in relation to the images we have assimilated and grouped round it; but a study of this fact would require considerable elaboration, and lead us too far from our immediate subject.

Not being able to sleep, I had a long discussion with my next neighbour in the dormitory as to the remarkable being who on the morrow was to be one of us. This neighbour, who became an officer, and is now a writer with lofty philosophical views, Barchou de Penhoën, has not been false to his predestination, nor to the hazard of fortune by which the only two scholars of Vendôme, of whose fame Vendôme ever hears, were brought together in the same classroom, on the same form, and under the same roof. Our comrade Dufaure had not, when this book was published, made his appearance in public life as a lawyer. The translator of Fichte, the expositor and friend of Ballanche, was already interested, as I myself was, in metaphysical questions; we often talked nonsense together about God, ourselves, and nature. He at that time affected pyrrhonism. Jealous of his place as leader, he doubted Lambert's precocious gifts; while I, having lately read *Les Enfants célèbres*, overwhelmed him with evidence, quoting young Montcalm, Pico della Mirandola, Pascal—in short, a score of early developed brains, anomalies that are famous in the history of the human mind, and Lambert's predecessors.

I was at the time passionately addicted to reading. My father, who was ambitious to see me in the École Polytechnique, paid for me to have a special course of private lessons in mathematics. My mathematical master was the librarian of the college, and allowed me to help myself to books without much caring what I chose to take from the library, a quiet spot where I went to him during play-hours to have my lesson. Either he was no great mathematician, or he was absorbed in some grand

scheme, for he very willingly left me to read when I ought to have been learning, while he worked at I knew not what. So, by a tacit understanding between us, I made no complaints of being taught nothing, and he said nothing of the books I borrowed.

Carried away by this ill-timed mania, I neglected my studies to compose poems, which certainly can have shown no great promise, to judge by a line of too many feet which became famous among my companions—the beginning of an epic on the Incas—

'O Inca! O roi infortuné et malheureux!'

In derision of such attempts, I was nicknamed the Poet, but mockery did not cure me. I was always rhyming, in spite of good advice from Monsieur Mareschal, the headmaster, who tried to cure me of an unfortunately inveterate passion by telling me the fable of a linnet that fell out of the nest because it tried to fly before its wings were grown. I persisted in my reading; I became the least emulous, the idlest, the most dreamy of all the division of 'little boys,' and consequently the most frequently punished.

This autobiographical digression may give some idea of the reflections I was led to make in anticipation of Lambert's arrival. I was then twelve years old. I felt sympathy from the first for the boy whose temperament had some points of likeness to my own. I was at last to have a companion in day-dreams and meditations. Though I knew not yet what glory meant, I thought it glory to be the familiar friend of a child whose immortality was foreseen by Madame de Staël. To me Louis Lambert was as a giant.

The looked-for morrow came at last. A minute before breakfast we heard the steps of Monsieur Mareschal and of the new boy in the quiet courtyard. Every head was turned at once to the door of the class-room. Father Haugoult, who participated in our torments of

curiosity, did not sound the whistle he used to reduce our mutterings to silence and bring us back to our tasks. We then saw this famous new boy, whom Monsieur Mareschal was leading by the hand. The superintendent descended from his desk, and the headmaster said to him solemnly, according to etiquette: 'Monsieur, I have brought you Monsieur Louis Lambert; will you place him in the fourth class, he will begin work to-morrow.'

Then, after speaking a few words in an undertone to the class-master, he said—

'Where can he sit?'

It would have been unfair to displace one of us for a new-comer; so as there was but one desk vacant, Louis Lambert came to fill it, next to me, for I had last joined the class. Though we still had some time to wait before lessons were over, we all stood up to look at Louis Lambert. Monsieur Mareschal heard our mutterings, saw how eager we were, and said, with the kindness that endeared him to us all—

'Well, well, but make no noise; do not disturb the other classes.'

These words set us free to play some little time before breakfast, and we all gathered round Lambert while Monsieur Mareschal walked up and down the courtyard with Father Haugoult.

There were about eighty of us little demons, as bold as birds of prey. Though we ourselves had all gone through this cruel novitiate, we showed no mercy on a new-comer, never sparing him the mockery, the catechism, the impertinence, which were inexhaustible on such occasions, to the discomfiture of the neophyte, whose manners, strength, and temper were thus tested. Lambert, whether he was stoical or dumbfounded, made no reply to any questions. One of us thereupon remarked that he was no doubt of the school of Pythagoras, and there was a shout of laughter. The new boy was thenceforth Pythagoras through all his life at the college.

At the same time, Lambert's piercing eye, the scorn expressed in his face for our childishness, so far removed from the stamp of his own nature, the easy attitude he assumed, and his evident strength in proportion to his years, infused a certain respect into the veriest scamps among us. For my part, I kept near him, absorbed in studying him in silence.

Louis Lambert was slightly built, nearly five feet in height ; his face was tanned, and his hands were burnt brown by the sun, giving him an appearance of manly vigour, which, in fact, he did not possess. Indeed, two months after he came to the college, when study in the classroom had faded his vivid, so to speak, vegetable colouring, he became as pale and white as a woman.

His head was unusually large. His hair, of a fine, bright black in masses of curls, gave wonderful beauty to his brow, of which the proportions were extraordinary even to us heedless boys, knowing nothing, as may be supposed, of the auguries of phrenology, a science still in its cradle. The distinction of this prophetic brow lay principally in the exquisitely chiselled shape of the arches under which his black eyes sparkled, and which had the transparency of alabaster, the line having the unusual beauty of being perfectly level to where it met the top of the nose. But when you saw his eyes it was difficult to think of the rest of his face, which was indeed plain enough, for their look was full of a wonderful variety of expression ; they seemed to have a soul in their depths. At one moment astonishingly clear and piercing, at another full of heavenly sweetness, those eyes became dull, almost colourless, as it seemed, when he was lost in meditation. They then looked like a window from which the sun had suddenly vanished after lighting it up. His strength and his voice were no less variable ; equally rigid, equally unexpected. His tone could be as sweet as that of a woman compelled to own her love ; at other

times it was laboured, rough, rugged, if I may use such words in a new sense. As to his strength, he was habitually incapable of enduring the fatigue of any game, and seemed weakly, almost infirm. But during the early days of his school-life, one of our little bullies having made game of this sickliness, which rendered him unfit for the violent exercise in vogue among his fellows, Lambert took hold with both hands of one of the class-tables, consisting of twelve large desks, face to face and sloping from the middle; he leaned back against the class-master's desk, steadying the table with his feet on the cross-bar below, and said—

'Now, ten of you try to move it!'

I was present, and can vouch for this strange display of strength; it was impossible to move the table.

Lambert had the gift of summoning to his aid at certain times the most extraordinary powers, and of concentrating all his forces on a given point. But children, like men, are wont to judge of everything by first impressions, and after the first few days we ceased to study Louis; he entirely belied Madame de Staël's prognostications, and displayed none of the prodigies we looked for in him.

After three months at school, Louis was looked upon as a quite ordinary scholar. I alone was allowed really to know that sublime—why should I not say divine?—soul, for what is nearer to God than genius in the heart of a child? The similarity of our tastes and ideas made us friends and chums; our intimacy was so brotherly that our school-fellows joined our two names; one was never spoken without the other, and to call either they always shouted 'Poet-and-Pythagoras!' Some other names had been known coupled in a like manner. Thus for two years I was the school friend of poor Louis Lambert; and during that time my life was so identified with his, that I am enabled now to write his intellectual biography.

It was long before I fully knew the poetry and the

wealth of ideas that lay hidden in my companion's heart and brain. It was not till I was thirty years of age, till my experience was matured and condensed, till the flash of an intense illumination had thrown a fresh light upon it, that I was capable of understanding all the bearings of the phenomena which I witnessed at that early time. I benefited by them without understanding their greatness or their processes; indeed, I have forgotten some, or remember only the most conspicuous facts; still, my memory is now able to co-ordinate them, and I have mastered the secrets of that fertile brain by looking back to the delightful days of our boyish affection. So it was time alone that initiated me into the meaning of the events and facts that were crowded into that obscure life, as into that of many another man who is lost to science. Indeed, this narrative, so far as the expression and appreciation of many things is concerned, will be found full of what may be termed moral anachronisms, which perhaps will not detract from its peculiar interest.

In the course of the first few months after coming to Vendôme, Louis became the victim of a malady which, though the symptoms were invisible to the eye of our superiors, considerably interfered with the exercise of his remarkable gifts. Accustomed to live in the open air, and to the freedom of a purely hap-hazard education, happy in the tender care of an old man who was devoted to him, used to meditating in the sunshine, he found it very hard to submit to college rules, to walk in the ranks, to live within the four walls of a room where eighty boys were sitting in silence on wooden forms each in front of his desk. His senses were developed to such perfection as gave them the most sensitive keenness, and every part of him suffered from this life in common.

The effluvia that vitiated the air, mingled with the odours of a class-room that was never clean or free from the fragments of our breakfasts or snacks, affected his

sense of smell, the sense which, being more immediately connected than the others with the nerve-centres of the brain, must, when shocked, cause invisible disturbance to the organs of thought.

Besides these elements of impurity in the atmosphere, there were lockers in the class-rooms in which the boys kept their miscellaneous plunder—pigeons killed for fête days, or titbits filched from the dinner-table. In each class-room, too, there was a large stone slab, on which two pails full of water were kept standing, a sort of sink, where we every morning washed our faces and hands, one after another, in the master's presence. We then passed on to a table, where women combed and powdered our hair. Thus the place, being cleaned but once a day before we were up, was always more or less dirty. In spite of numerous windows and lofty doors, the air was constantly fouled by the smells from the washing-place, the hairdressing, the lockers, and the thousand messes made by the boys, to say nothing of their eighty closely packed bodies. And this sort of *humus*, mingling with the mud we brought in from the playing-yard, produced a suffocatingly pestilent muck-heap.

The loss of the fresh and fragrant country air in which he had hitherto lived, the change of habits and strict discipline, combined to depress Lambert. With his elbow on his desk and his head supported on his left hand, he spent the hours of study gazing at the trees in the court or the clouds in the sky ; he seemed to be thinking of his lessons ; but the master, seeing his pen motionless, or the sheet before him still a blank, would call out—

'Lambert, you are doing nothing !'

This '*you are doing nothing !*' was a pin-thrust that wounded Louis to the quick. And then he never earned the rest of play-time ; he always had impositions to write. The imposition, a punishment which varies according to the practice of different schools, consisted at Vendôme of a certain number of lines to be written out

in play hours. Lambert and I were so overpowered with impositions, that we had not six free days during the two years of our school friendship. But for the books we took out of the library, which maintained some vitality in our brains, this system of discipline would have reduced us to idiotcy. Want of exercise is fatal to children. The habit of preserving a dignified appearance, begun in tender infancy, has, it is said, a visible effect on the constitution of royal personages when the faults of such an education are not counteracted by the life of the battle-field or the laborious sport of hunting. And if the laws of etiquette and Court manners can act on the spinal marrow to such an extent as to affect the pelvis of kings, to soften their cerebral tissue, and so degenerate the race, what deep-seated mischief, physical and moral, must result in schoolboys from the constant lack of air, exercise, and cheerfulness!

Indeed, the rules of punishment carried out in schools deserve the attention of the Office of Public Instruction when any thinkers are to be found there who do not think exclusively of themselves.

We incurred the infliction of an imposition in a thousand ways. Our memory was so good that we never learned a lesson. It was enough for either of us to hear our class-fellows repeat the task in French, Latin, or grammar, and we could say it when our turn came; but if the master, unfortunately, took it into his head to reverse the usual order and call upon us first, we very often did not even know what the lesson was; then the imposition fell in spite of our most ingenious excuses. Then we always put off writing our exercises till the last moment; if there were a book to be finished, or if we were lost in thought, the task was forgotten—again an imposition. How often have we scribbled an exercise during the time when the head-boy, whose business it was to collect them when we came into school, was gathering them from the others!

In addition to the moral misery which Lambert went through in trying to acclimatise himself to college life, there was a scarcely less cruel apprenticeship through which every boy had to pass: to those bodily sufferings which seemed infinitely varied. The tenderness of a child's skin needs extreme care, especially in winter, when a school-boy is constantly exchanging the frozen air of the muddy playing-yard for the stuffy atmosphere of the class-room. The 'little boys' and the smallest of all, for lack of a mother's care, were martyrs to chilblains and chaps so severe that they had to be regularly dressed during the breakfast hour; but this could only be very indifferently done to so many damaged hands, toes, and heels. A good many of the boys indeed were obliged to prefer the evil to the remedy; the choice constantly lay between their lessons waiting to be finished or the joys of a slide, and waiting for a bandage carelessly put on, and still more carelessly cast off again. Also it was the fashion in the school to gibe at the poor, feeble creatures who went to be doctored; the bullies vied with each other in snatching off the rags which the infirmary nurse had tied on. Hence, in winter, many of us, with half-dead feet and fingers, sick with pain, were incapable of work, and punished for not working. The Fathers, too often deluded by shammed ailments, would not believe in real suffering.

The price paid for our schooling and board also covered the cost of clothing. The committee contracted for the shoes and clothes supplied to the boys; hence the weekly inspection of which I have spoken. This plan, though admirable for the manager, is always disastrous to the managed. Woe to the boy who indulged in the bad habit of treading his shoes down at heel, of cracking the shoe-leather, or wearing out the soles too fast, whether from a defect in his gait, or by fidgeting during lessons in obedience to the instinctive need of movement common to all children. That boy did not get through the

winter without great suffering. In the first place, his chilblains would ache and shoot as badly as a fit of the gout; then the rivets and pack-thread intended to repair the shoes would give way, or the broken heels would prevent the wretched shoes from keeping on his feet; he was obliged to drag them wearily along the frozen roads, or sometimes to dispute their possession with the clay soil of the district; the water and snow got in through some unnoticed crack or ill-sewn patch, and the foot would swell.

Out of sixty boys, not ten perhaps could walk without some special form of torture; and yet they all kept up with the body of the troop, dragged on by the general movement, as men are driven through life by life itself. Many a time some proud-tempered boy would shed tears of rage while summoning his remaining energy to run ahead and get home again in spite of pain, so sensitively afraid of laughter or of pity—two forms of scorn—is the still tender soul at that age.

At school, as in social life, the strong despise the feeble without knowing in what true strength consists.

Nor was this all. No gloves. If by good hap a boy's parents, the infirmary nurse, or the headmaster gave gloves to a particularly delicate lad, the wags or the big boys of the class would put them on the stove, amused to see them dry and shrivel; or if the gloves escaped the marauders, after getting wet they shrunk as they dried for want of care. No, gloves were impossible. Gloves were a privilege, and boys insist on equality.

Louis Lambert fell a victim to all these varieties of torment. Like many contemplative men, who, when lost in thought, acquire a habit of mechanical motion, he had a mania for fidgeting with his shoes, and destroyed them very quickly. His girlish complexion, the skin of his ears and lips, cracked with the least cold. His soft, white hands grew red and swollen. He had perpetual colds. Thus he was a constant sufferer till he became

inured to school-life. Taught at last by cruel experience, he was obliged to 'look after his things,' to use the school phrase. He was forced to take care of his locker, his desk, his clothes, his shoes; to protect his ink, his books, his copy-paper, and his pens from pilferers; in short, to give his mind to the thousand details of our trivial life, to which more selfish and commonplace minds devoted such strict attention—thus infallibly securing prizes for 'proficiency' and 'good conduct'—while they were overlooked by a boy of the highest promise, who, under the hand of an almost divine imagination, gave himself up with rapture to the flow of his ideas.

This was not all. There is a perpetual struggle going on between the masters and the boys, a struggle without truce, to be compared with nothing else in the social world, unless it be the resistance of the opposition to the ministry in a representative government. But journalists and opposition speakers are probably less prompt to take advantage of a weak point, less extreme in resenting an injury, and less merciless in their mockery than boys are in regard to those who rule over them. It is a task to put angels out of patience. An unhappy class-master must then not be too severely blamed, ill-paid as he is, and consequently not too competent, if he is occasionally unjust or out of temper. Perpetually watched by a hundred mocking eyes, and surrounded with snares, he sometimes revenges himself for his own blunders on the boys who are only too ready to detect them.

Unless for serious misdemeanours, for which there were other forms of punishment, the strap was regarded at Vendôme as the *ultima ratio Patrum.* Exercises forgotten, lessons ill learnt, common ill behaviour were sufficiently punished by an imposition, but offended dignity spoke in the master through the strap. Of all the physical torments to which we were exposed, certainly the most acute was that inflicted by this leathern instrument, about two fingers wide, applied to our poor

little hands with all the strength and all the fury of the administrator. To endure this classical form of correction, the victim knelt in the middle of the room. He had to leave his form and go to kneel down near the master's desk under the curious and generally merciless eyes of his fellows. To sensitive natures these preliminaries were an introductory torture, like the journey from the Palais de Justice to the Place de Grève which the condemned used to make to the scaffold.

Some boys cried out and shed bitter tears before or after the application of the strap; others accepted the infliction with stoic calm; it was a question of nature; but few could control an expression of anguish in anticipation.

Louis Lambert was constantly enduring the strap, and owed it to a peculiarity of his physiognomy of which he was for a long time quite unconscious. Whenever he was suddenly roused from a fit of abstraction by the master's cry, 'You are doing nothing!' it often happened that, without knowing it, he flashed at his teacher a look full of fierce contempt, and charged with thought, as a Leyden jar is charged with electricity. This look, no doubt, discomfited the master, who, indignant at this unspoken retort, wished to cure his scholar of that thunderous flash.

The first time the Father took offence at this ray of scorn, which struck him like a lightning-flash, he made this speech, as I well remember—

'If you look at me again in that way, Lambert, you will get the strap.'

At these words every nose was in the air, every eye looked alternately at the master and at Louis. The observation was so utterly foolish, that the boy again looked at the Father, overwhelming him with another flash. From this arose a standing feud between Lambert and his master, resulting in a certain amount of 'strap.' Thus did he first discover the power of his eye.

The hapless poet, so full of nerves, as sensitive as a woman, under the sway of chronic melancholy, and as sick with genius as a girl with love that she pines for, knowing nothing of it;—this boy, at once so powerful and so weak, transplanted by 'Corinne' from the country he loved, to be squeezed in the mould of a collegiate routine to which every spirit and every body must yield, whatever their range or temperament, accepting its rule and its uniform as gold is crushed into round coin under the press; Louis Lambert suffered in every spot where pain can touch the soul or the flesh. Stuck on a form, restricted to the acreage of his desk, a victim to the strap and to a sickly frame, tortured in every sense, environed by distress—everything compelled him to give his body up to the myriad tyrannies of school life; and, like the martyrs who smiled in the midst of suffering, he took refuge in heaven, which lay open to his mind. Perhaps this life of purely inward emotions helped him to see something of the mysteries he so entirely believed in!

Our independence, our illicit amusements, our apparent waste of time, our persistent indifference, our frequent punishments and aversion for our exercises and impositions, earned us a reputation, which no one cared to controvert, for being an idle and incorrigible pair. Our masters treated us with contempt, and we fell into utter disgrace with our companions, from whom we concealed our secret studies for fear of being laughed at. This hard judgment, which was injustice in the masters, was but natural in our schoolfellows. We could neither play ball, nor run races, nor walk on stilts. On exceptional holidays, when amnesty was proclaimed and we got a few hours of freedom, we shared in none of the popular diversions of the school. Aliens from the pleasures enjoyed by the others, we were outcasts, sitting forlorn under a tree in the playing-ground. The Poet-and-Pythagoras formed an exception and led a life apart from the life of the rest.

The penetrating instinct and unerring conceit of schoolboys made them feel that we were of a nature either far above or far beneath their own ; hence some simply hated our aristocratic reserve, others merely scorned our ineptitude. These feelings were equally shared by us without our knowing it ; perhaps I have but now divined them. We lived exactly like two rats, huddled into the corner of the room where our desks were, sitting there alike during lesson time and play hours. This strange state of affairs inevitably and in fact placed us on a footing of war with all the other boys in our division. Forgotten for the most part, we sat there very contentedly ; half happy, like two plants, two images who would have been missed from the furniture of the room. But the most aggressive of our schoolfellows would sometimes torment us, just to show their malignant power, and we responded with stolid contempt, which brought many a thrashing down on the Poet-and-Pythagoras.

Lambert's home-sickness lasted for many months. I know no words to describe the dejection to which he was a prey. Louis has taken the glory off many a masterpiece for me. We had both played the part of the 'Leper of Aosta,' and had both experienced the feelings described in Monsieur de Maistre's story, before we read them as expressed by his eloquent pen. A book may, indeed, revive the memories of our childhood, but it can never compete with them successfully. Lambert's woes had taught me many a chant of sorrow far more appealing than the finest passages in 'Werther.' And, indeed, there is no possible comparison between the pangs of a passion condemned, whether rightly or wrongly, by every law, and the grief of a poor child pining for the glorious sunshine, the dews of the valley, and liberty. Werther is the slave of desire ; Louis Lambert was an enslaved soul. Given equal talent, the more pathetic sorrow, founded on desires which, being purer, are

the more genuine, must transcend the wail even of genius.

After sitting for a long time with his eyes fixed on a lime-tree in the playground, Louis would say just a word ; but that word would reveal an infinite speculation.

'Happily for me,' he exclaimed one day, 'there are hours of comfort when I feel as though the walls of the room had fallen and I were away—away in the fields! What a pleasure it is to let oneself go on the stream of one's thoughts as a bird is borne up on its wings!'

'Why is green a colour so largely diffused throughout creation?' he would ask me. 'Why are there so few straight lines in nature? Why is it that man, in his structures, rarely introduces curves? Why is it that he alone, of all creatures, has a sense of straightness?'

These queries revealed long excursions in space. He had, I am sure, seen vast landscapes, fragrant with the scent of woods. He was always silent and resigned, a living elegy, always suffering but unable to complain of suffering. An eagle that needed the world to feed him, shut in between four narrow, dirty walls; and thus his life became an ideal life in the strictest meaning of the words. Filled as he was with contempt of the almost useless studies to which we were harnessed, Louis went on his skyward way absolutely unconscious of the things about us.

I, obeying the imitative instinct that is so strong in childhood, tried to regulate my life in conformity with his. And Louis the more easily infected me with the sort of torpor in which deep contemplation leaves the body, because I was younger and more impressionable than he. Like two lovers, we got into the habit of thinking together in a common reverie. His intuitions had already acquired that acuteness which must surely characterise the intellectual perceptiveness of great poets and often bring them to the verge of madness.

'Do you ever feel,' said he to me one day, 'as though

imagined suffering affected you in spite of yourself? If, for instance, I think with concentration of the effect that the blade of my penknife would have in piercing my flesh, I feel an acute pain as if I had really cut myself; only the blood is wanting. But the pain comes suddenly, and startles me like a sharp noise breaking profound silence. Can an idea cause physical pain!—What do you say to that, eh?'

When he gave utterance to such subtle reflections, we both fell into artless meditation; we set to work to detect in ourselves the inscrutable phenomena of the origin of thoughts, which Lambert hoped to discover in their earliest germ, so as to describe some day the unknown process. Then, after much discussion, often mixed up with childish notions, a look would flash from Lambert's eager eyes; he would grasp my hand, and a word from the depths of his soul would show the current of his mind.

'Thinking is seeing,' said he one day, carried away by some objection raised as to the first principles of our organisation. 'Every human science is based on deduction, which is a slow process of seeing by which we work up from the effect to the cause; or, in a wider sense, all poetry, like every work of art, proceeds from a swift vision of things.'

He was a spiritualist (as opposed to materialism); but I would venture to contradict him, using his own arguments to consider the intellect as a purely physical phenomenon. We both were right. Perhaps the words materialism and spiritualism express the two faces of the same fact. His considerations on the substance of the mind led to his accepting, with a certain pride, the life of privation to which we were condemned in consequence of our idleness and our indifference to learning. He had a certain consciousness of his own powers which bore him up through his spiritual cogitations. How delightful it was to me to feel his soul acting on my own!

Many a time have we remained sitting on our form, both buried in one book, having quite forgotten each other's existence, and yet not apart; each conscious of the other's presence, and bathing in an ocean of thought, like two fish swimming in the same waters.

Our life, apparently, was merely vegetating; but we lived through our heart and brain.

Lambert's influence over my imagination left traces that still abide. I used to listen hungrily to his tales, full of the marvels which make men, as well as children, rapturously devour stories in which truth assumes the most grotesque forms. His passion for mystery, and the credulity natural to the young, often led us to discuss Heaven and Hell. Then Louis, by expounding Swedenborg, would try to make me share in his beliefs concerning angels. In his least logical arguments there were still amazing observations as to the powers of man, which gave his words that colour of truth without which nothing can be done in any art. The romantic end he foresaw as the destiny of man was calculated to flatter the yearning which tempts blameless imaginations to give themselves up to beliefs. Is it not during the youth of a nation that its dogmas and idols are conceived? And are not the supernatural beings before whom the people tremble the personification of their feelings and their magnified desires.

All that I can now remember of the poetical conversations we held together concerning the Swedish prophet, whose works I have since had the curiosity to read, may be told in a few paragraphs.

In each of us there are two distinct beings. According to Swedenborg, the angel is an individual in whom the inner being conquers the external being. If a man desires to earn his call to be an angel, as soon as his mind reveals to him his twofold existence, he must strive to foster the delicate angelic essence that exists within

him. If, for lack of a lucid appreciation of his destiny, he allows bodily action to predominate, instead of confirming his intellectual being, all his powers will be absorbed in the use of his external senses, and the angel will slowly perish by the materialisation of both natures. In the contrary case, if he nourishes his inner being with the aliment needful to it, the soul triumphs over matter and strives to get free.

When they separate by the act of what we call death, the angel, strong enough then to cast off its wrappings, survives and begins its real life. The infinite variety which differentiates individual men can only be explained by this twofold existence, which, again, is proved and made intelligible by that variety.

In point of fact, the wide distance between a man whose torpid intelligence condemns him to evident stupidity, and one who, by the exercise of his inner life, has acquired the gift of some power, allows us to suppose that there is as great a difference between men of genius and other beings as there is between the blind and those who see. This hypothesis, since it extends creation beyond all limits, gives us, as it were, the clue to heaven. The beings who, here on earth, are apparently mingled without distinction, are there distributed, according to their inner perfection, in distinct spheres whose speech and manners have nothing in common. In the invisible world, as in the real world, if some native of the lower spheres comes, all unworthy, into a higher sphere, not only can he never understand the customs and language there, but his mere presence paralyses the voice and hearts of those who dwell therein.

Dante, in his *Divine Comedy*, had perhaps some slight intuition of those spheres which begin in the world of torment, and rise, circle on circle, to the highest heaven. Thus Swedenborg's doctrine is the product of a lucid spirit noting down the innumerable signs by which the angels manifest their presence among men.

This doctrine, which I have endeavoured to sum up in a more or less consistent form, was set before me by Lambert with all the fascination of mysticism, swathed in the wrappings of the phraseology affected by mystical writers: an obscure language full of abstractions, and taking such effect on the brain, that there are books by Jacob Bœhm, Swedenborg, and Madame Guyon, so strangely powerful that they give rise to phantasies as various as the dreams of the opium-eater. Lambert told me of mystical facts so extraordinary, he so acted on my imagination, that he made my brain reel. Still, I loved to plunge into that realm of mystery, invisible to the senses, in which every one likes to dwell, whether he pictures it to himself under the indefinite ideal of the Future, or clothes it in the more solid guise of romance. These violent revulsions of the mind on itself gave me, without my knowing it, a comprehension of its power, and accustomed me to the workings of the mind.

Lambert himself explained everything by his theory of the angels. To him pure love—love as we dream of it in youth—was the coalescence of two angelic natures. Nothing could exceed the fervency with which he longed to meet a woman angel. And who better than he could inspire or feel love? If anything could give an impression of an exquisite nature, was it not the amiability and kindliness that marked his feelings, his words, his actions, his slightest gestures, the conjugal regard that united us as boys, and that we expressed when we called ourselves *chums*?

There was no distinction for us between my ideas and his. We imitated each other's handwriting, so that one might write the tasks of both. Thus, if one of us had a book to finish and to return to the mathematical master, he could read on without interruption while the other scribbled off his exercise and imposition. We did our tasks as though paying a task on our peace of mind. If my memory does not play me false, they were some-

times of remarkable merit when Lambert did them. But on the foregone conclusion that we were both of us idiots, the master always went through them under a rooted prejudice, and even kept them to read to be laughed at by our schoolfellows.

I remember one afternoon, at the end of the lesson, which lasted from two till four, the master took possession of a page of translation by Lambert. The passage began with, *Caius Gracchus*, *vir nobilis;* Lambert had construed this by 'Caius Gracchus had a noble heart.'

'Where do you find "heart" in *nobilis*?' said the Father sharply.

And there was a roar of laughter, while Lambert looked at the master in some bewilderment.

'What would Madame la Baronne de Staël say if she could know that you make such nonsense of a word that means of noble family, of patrician rank?'

'She would say that you were an ass!' said I in a muttered tone.

'Master Poet, you will stay in for a week,' replied the master, who unfortunately overheard me.

Lambert simply repeated, looking at me with inexpressible affection, '*Vir nobilis!*'

Madame de Staël was, in fact, partly the cause of Lambert's troubles. On every pretext masters and pupils threw the name in his teeth, either in irony or in reproof.

Louis lost no time in getting himself 'kept in' to share my imprisonment. Freer thus than in any other circumstances, we could talk the whole day long in the silence of the dormitories, where each boy had a cubicle six feet square, the partitions consisting at the top of open bars. The doors, fitted with gratings, were locked at night and opened in the morning under the eye of the Father whose duty it was to superintend our rising and going to bed. The creak of these gates, which the college servants unlocked with remarkable expedition,

was a sound peculiar to that college. These little cells were our prison, and boys were sometimes shut up there for a month at a time. The boys in these coops were under the stern eye of the prefect, a sort of censor who stole up at certain hours, or at unexpected moments, with a silent step, to hear if we were talking instead of writing our impositions. But a few walnut shells dropped on the stairs, or the sharpness of our hearing, almost always enabled us to beware of his coming, so we could give ourselves up without anxiety to our favourite studies. However, as books were prohibited, our prison hours were chiefly filled up with metaphysical discussions, or with relating singular facts connected with the phenomena of mind.

One of the most extraordinary of these incidents beyond question is this, which I will here record, not only because it concerns Lambert, but because it perhaps was the turning-point of his scientific career. By the law of custom in all schools, Thursday and Sunday were holidays; but the services, which we were made to attend very regularly, so completely filled up Sunday, that we considered Thursday our only real day of freedom. After once attending mass, we had a long day before us to spend in walks in the country round the town of Vendôme. The manor of Rochambeau was the most interesting object of our excursions, perhaps by reason of its distance; the smaller boys were very seldom taken on so fatiguing an expedition. However, once or twice a year the class-masters would hold out Rochambeau as a reward for diligence.

In 1812, towards the end of the spring, we were to go there for the first time. Our anxiety to see this famous château of Rochambeau, where the owner sometimes treated the boys to milk, made us all very good, and nothing hindered the outing. Neither Lambert nor I had ever seen the pretty valley of the Loir where the house stood. So his imagination and mine were much excited

by the prospect of this excursion, which filled the school with traditional glee. We talked of it all the evening, planning to spend in fruit or milk such money as we had saved, against all the habits of school-life.

After dinner next day, we set out at half-past twelve, each provided with a square hunch of bread, given to us for our afternoon snack. And off we went, as gay as swallows, marching in a body on the famous château with an eagerness which would at first allow of no fatigue. When we reached the hill, whence we looked down on the house standing halfway down the slope, on the devious valley through which the river winds and sparkles between meadows in graceful curves—a beautiful landscape, one of those scenes to which the keen emotions of early youth or of love lend such a charm, that it is wise never to see them again in later years—Louis Lambert said to me, 'Why, I saw this last night in a dream.'

He recognised the clump of trees under which we were standing, the grouping of the woods, the colour of the water, the turrets of the château, the details, the distance, in fact every part of the prospect which he looked on for the first time. We were mere children; I, at any rate, who was but thirteen; Louis, at fifteen, might have the precocity of genius, but at that time we were incapable of falsehood in the most trivial matters of our life as friends. Indeed, if Lambert's powerful mind had any presentiment of the importance of such facts, he was far from appreciating their whole bearing; and he was quite astonished by this incident. I asked him if he had not perhaps been brought to Rochambeau in his infancy, and my question struck him; but after thinking it over, he answered in the negative. This incident, analogous to what may be known of the phenomena of sleep in several persons, will illustrate the beginnings of Lambert's line of talent; he took it, in fact, as the basis of a whole system, using a fragment—as Cuvier did in

another branch of inquiry—as a clue to the reconstruction of a complete system.

At this moment we were sitting together on an old oak-stump, and after a few minutes' reflection, Louis said to me—

'If the landscape did not come to me—which it is absurd to imagine—I must have come here. If I was here while I was asleep in my cubicle, does not that constitute a complete severance of my body and my inner being? Does it not prove some inscrutable locomotive faculty in the spirit with effects resembling those of locomotion in the body? Well, then, if my spirit and my body can be severed during sleep, why should I not insist on their separating in the same way while I am awake? I see no half-way mean between the two propositions.

'But if we go further into details: Either the facts are due to the action of a faculty which brings out a second being to whom my body is merely a husk, since I was in my cell, and yet I saw the landscape—and this upsets many systems; or the facts took place either in some nerve centre, of which the name is yet to be discovered, where our feelings dwell and move; or else in the cerebral centre, where ideas are formed. This last hypothesis gives rise to some strange questions. I walked, I saw, I heard. Motion is inconceivable but in space, sound acts only at certain angles or on surfaces, colour is caused only by light. If, in the dark, with my eyes shut, I saw, in myself, coloured objects; if I heard sounds in the most perfect silence and without the conditions requisite for the production of sound; if without stirring I traversed wide tracts of space, there must be inner faculties independent of the external laws of physics. Material nature must be penetrable by the spirit.

'How is it that men have hitherto given so little thought to the phenomena of sleep, which seem to prove

that man has a double life? May there not be a new science lying beneath them?' he added, striking his brow with his hand. 'If not the elements of a science, at any rate the revelation of stupendous powers in man; at least they prove a frequent severance of our two natures, the fact I have been thinking out for a very long time. At last, then, I have hit on evidence to show the superiority that distinguishes our latent senses from our corporeal senses! *Homo duplex!*

'And yet,' he went on, after a pause, with a doubtful shrug, 'perhaps we have not two natures; perhaps we are merely gifted with personal and perfectible qualities, of which the development within us produces certain unobserved phenomena of activity, penetration, and vision. In our love of the marvellous, a passion begotten of our pride, we have translated these effects into poetical inventions, because we did not understand them. It is so convenient to deify the incomprehensible!

'I should, I own, lament over the loss of my illusions. I so much wished to believe in our twofold nature and in Swedenborg's angels. Must this new science destroy them? Yes; for the study of our unknown properties involves us in a science that appears to be materialistic, for the Spirit uses, divides, and animates the Substance; but it does not destroy it.'

He remained pensive, almost sad. Perhaps he saw the dreams of his youth as swaddling clothes that he must soon shake off.

'Sight and hearing are, no doubt, the sheaths for a very marvellous instrument,' said he, laughing at his own figure of speech.

Always when he was talking to me of Heaven and Hell, he was wont to treat of Nature as being master; but now, as he pronounced these last words, big with prescience, he seemed to soar more boldly than ever above the landscape, and his forehead seemed ready to burst with the afflatus of genius. His powers—mental powers we must

call them till some new term is found—seemed to flash from the organs intended to express them. His eyes shot out thoughts; his uplifted hand, his silent but tremulous lips were eloquent; his burning glance was radiant; at last his head, as though too heavy, or exhausted by too eager a flight, fell on his breast. This boy—this giant—bent his head, took my hand and clasped it in his own, which was damp, so fevered was he for the search for truth; then, after a pause, he said—

'I shall be famous!—And you too,' he added after a pause. 'We will both study the Chemistry of the Will.'

Noble soul! I recognised his superiority, though he took great care never to make me feel it. He shared with me all the treasures of his mind, and regarded me as instrumental in his discoveries, leaving me the credit of my insignificant contributions. He was always as gracious as a woman in love; he had all the bashful feeling, the delicacy of soul which make life happy and pleasant to endure.

On the following day he began writing what he called a *Treatise on the Will*; his subsequent reflections led to many changes in its plan and method; but the incident of that day was certainly the germ of the work, just as the electric shock always felt by Mesmer at the approach of a particular man-servant was the starting-point of his discoveries in magnetism, a science till then interred under the mysteries of Isis, of Delphi, of the cave of Trophonius, and rediscovered by that prodigious genius, close on Lavater, and the precursor of Gall.

Lambert's ideas, suddenly illuminated by this flash of light, assumed vaster proportions; he disentangled certain truths from his many acquisitions and brought them into order; then, like a founder, he cast the model of his work. At the end of six months' indefatigable labour, Lambert's writings excited the curiosity of our com-

panions, and became the object of cruel practical jokes which led to a fatal issue.

One day one of the masters, who was bent on seeing the manuscripts, enlisted the aid of our tyrants, and came to seize, by force, a box that contained the precious papers. Lambert and I defended it with incredible courage. The trunk was locked, our aggressors could not open it, but they tried to smash it in the struggle, a stroke of malignity at which we shrieked with rage. Some of the boys, with a sense of justice, or struck perhaps by our heroic defence, advised the attacking party to leave us in peace, crushing us with insulting contempt. But suddenly, brought to the spot by the noise of a battle, Father Haugoult roughly intervened, inquiring as to the cause of the fight. Our enemies had interrupted us in writing our impositions, and the class-master came to protect his slaves. The foe, in self-defence, betrayed the existence of the manuscript. The dreadful Haugoult insisted on our giving up the box; if we should resist, he would have it broken open. Lambert gave him the key; the master took out the papers, glanced through them, and said, as he confiscated them—

'And it is for such rubbish as this that you neglect your lessons!'

Large tears fell from Lambert's eyes, wrung from him as much by a sense of his offended moral superiority as by the gratuitous insult and betrayal that we had suffered. We gave the accusers a glance of stern reproach: had they not delivered us over to the common enemy? If the common law of school entitled them to thrash us, did it not require them to keep silence as to our misdeeds?

In a moment they were no doubt ashamed of their baseness.

Father Haugoult probably sold the *Treatise on the Will* to a local grocer, unconscious of the scientific

treasure, of which the germs thus fell into unworthy hands.

Six months later I left the school, and I do not know whether Lambert ever recommenced his labours. Our parting threw him into a mood of the darkest melancholy.

It was in memory of the disaster that befell Louis's book that, in the tale which comes first in these *Études*, I adopted the title invented by Lambert for a work of fiction, and gave the name of a woman who was dear to him to a girl characterised by her self-devotion ; but this is not all I have borrowed from him : his character and occupations were of great value to me in writing that book, and the subject arose from some reminiscences of our youthful meditations. This present volume is intended as a modest monument, a broken column, to commemorate the life of the man who bequeathed to me all he had to leave—his thoughts.

In that boyish effort Lambert had enshrined the ideas of a man. Ten years later, when I met some learned men who were devoting serious attention to the phenomena that had struck us and that Lambert had so marvellously analysed, I understood the value of his work, then already forgotten as childish. I at once spent several months in recalling the principal theories discovered by my poor school-mate. Having collected my reminiscences, I can boldly state that, by 1812, he had proved, divined, and set forth in his Treatise several important facts of which, as he had declared, evidence was certain to come sooner or later. His philosophical speculations ought undoubtedly to gain him recognition as one of the great thinkers who have appeared at wide intervals among men, to reveal to them the bare skeleton of some science to come, of which the roots spread slowly, but which, in due time, bring forth fair fruit in the intellectual sphere. Thus a humble artisan, Bernard

Palissy, searching the soil to find minerals for glazing pottery, proclaimed, in the sixteenth century, with the infallible intuition of genius, geological facts which it is now the glory of Cuvier and Buffon to have demonstrated.

I can, I believe, give some idea of Lambert's Treatise by stating the chief propositions on which it was based; but, in spite of myself, I shall strip them of the ideas in which they were clothed, and which were indeed their indispensable accompaniment. I started on a different path, and only made use of those of his researches which answered the purpose of my scheme. I know not, therefore, whether as his disciple I can faithfully expound his views, having assimilated them in the first instance so as to colour them with my own.

New ideas require new words, or a new and expanded use of old words, extended and defined in their meaning. Thus Lambert, to set forth the basis of his system, had adopted certain common words that answered to his notions. The word Will he used to connote the medium in which the mind moves, or to use a less abstract expression, the mass of power by which man can reproduce, outside himself, the actions constituting his external life. Volition—a word due to Locke—expressed the act by which a man exerts his will. The word Mind, or Thought, which he regarded as the quintessential product of the Will, also represented the medium in which the ideas originate to which thought gives substance. The Idea, a name common to every creation of the brain, constituted the act by which man uses his mind. Thus the Will and the Mind were the two generating forces; the Volition and the Idea were the two products. Volition, he thought, was the Idea evolved from the abstract state to a concrete state, from its generative fluid to a solid expression, so to speak, if such words may be taken to formulate notions so difficult of definition. According to him, the Mind and Ideas

are the motion and the outcome of our inner organisation, just as the Will and Volition are of our external activity.

He gave the Will precedence over the Mind.

'You must will before you can think,' he said. 'Many beings live in a condition of Willing without ever attaining to the condition of Thinking. In the North, life is long; in the South, it is shorter; but in the North we see torpor, in the South a constant excitability of the Will, up to the point where from an excess of cold or of heat the organs are almost nullified.'

The use of the word 'medium' was suggested to him by an observation he had made in his childhood, though, to be sure, he had no suspicion then of its importance, but its singularity naturally struck his delicately alert imagination. His mother, a fragile, nervous woman, all sensitiveness and affection, was one of those beings created to represent womanhood in all the perfection of her attributes, but relegated by a mistaken fate to too low a place in the social scale. Wholly loving, and consequently wholly suffering, she died young, having thrown all her energies into her motherly love. Lambert, a child of six, lying, but not always sleeping, in a cot by his mother's bed, saw the electric sparks from her hair when she combed it. The man of fifteen made scientific application of this fact which had amused the child, a fact beyond dispute, of which there is ample evidence in many instances, especially of women who by a sad fatality are doomed to let unappreciated feelings evaporate in the air, or some superabundant power run to waste.

In support of his definitions, Lambert propounded a variety of problems to be solved, challenges flung out to science, though he proposed to seek the solution for himself. He inquired, for instance, whether the element that constitutes electricity does not enter as a base into the specific fluid whence our Ideas and Volitions proceed?

Whether the hair, which loses its colour, turns white, falls out, or disappears, in proportion to the decay or crystallisation of our thoughts, may not be in fact a capillary system, either absorbent or diffusive, and wholly electrical? Whether the fluid phenomena of the Will, a matter generated within us, and spontaneously reacting under the impress of conditions as yet unobserved, were at all more extraordinary than those of the invisible and intangible fluid produced by a voltaic pile, and applied to the nervous system of a dead man? Whether the formation of Ideas and their constant diffusion was less incomprehensible than evaporation of the atoms, imperceptible indeed, but so violent in their effects, that are given off from a grain of musk without any loss of weight. Whether, granting that the function of the skin is purely protective, absorbent, excretive, and tactile, the circulation of the blood and all its mechanism would not correspond with the transubstantiation of our Will, as the circulation of the nerve fluid corresponds to that of the Mind? Finally, whether the more or less rapid affluence of these two real substances may not be the result of a certain perfection or imperfection of organs whose conditions require investigation in every manifestation?

Having set forth these principles, he proposed to class the phenomena of human life in two series of distinct results, demanding, with the ardent insistency of conviction, a special analysis for each. In fact, having observed in almost every type of created thing two separate motions, he assumed, nay, he asserted, their existence in our human nature, and designated this vital antithesis Action and Reaction.

'A desire,' he said, 'is a fact completely accomplished in our will before it is accomplished externally.'

Hence the sum-total of our Volitions and our Ideas constitutes Action, and the sum-total of our external acts he called Reaction.

When I subsequently read the observations made by Bichat on the duality of our external senses, I was really bewildered by my recollections, recognising the startling coincidences between the views of that celebrated physiologist and those of Louis Lambert. They both died too young, and they had with equal steps arrived at the same strange truths. Nature has in every case been pleased to give a twofold purpose to the various apparatus that constitute her creatures ; and the twofold action of the human organism, which is now ascertained beyond dispute, proves by a mass of evidence in daily life how true were Lambert's deductions as to Action and Reaction.

The inner Being, the Being of Action—the word he used to designate an unknown specialisation—the mysterious nexus of fibrils to which we owe the inadequately investigated powers of thought and will—in short, the nameless entity which sees, acts, foresees the end, and accomplishes everything before expressing itself in any physical phenomenon—must, in conformity with its nature, be free from the physical conditions by which the external Being of Reaction, the visible man, is fettered in its manifestation. From this followed a multitude of logical explanation as to those results of our twofold nature which appear the strangest, and a rectification of various systems in which truth and falsehood are mingled.

Certain men, having had a glimpse of some phenomena of the natural working of the Being of Action, were, like Swedenborg, carried away above this world by their ardent soul, thirsting for poetry, and filled with the Divine Spirit. Thus, in their ignorance of the causes and their admiration of the facts, they pleased their fancy by regarding that inner man as divine, and constructing a mystical universe. Hence we have angels ! A lovely illusion which Lambert would never abandon, cherishing it even when the sword of his logic was cutting off their dazzling wings.

'Heaven,' he would say, 'must, after all, be the survival of our perfected faculties, and hell the void into which our unperfected faculties are cast away.'

But how, then, in the ages when the understanding had preserved the religious and spiritualist impressions, which prevailed from the time of Christ till that of Descartes, between faith and doubt, how could men help accounting for the mysteries of our nature otherwise than by divine interposition? Of whom but of God Himself could sages demand an account of an invisible creature so actively and so reactively sensitive, gifted with faculties so extensive, so improvable by use, and so powerful under certain occult influences, that they could sometimes see it annihilate, by some phenomenon of sight or movement, space in its two manifestations—Time and Distance—of which the former is the space of the intellect, the latter is physical space? Sometimes they found it reconstructing the past, either by the power of retrospective vision, or by the mystery of a palingenesis not unlike the power a man might have of detecting in the form, integument, and embryo in a seed, the flowers of the past, and the numberless variations of their colour, scent, and shape; and sometimes, again, it could be seen vaguely foreseeing the future, either by its apprehension of final causes, or by some phenomenon of physical pre-sentiment.

Other men, less poetically religious, cold, and argumentative—quacks perhaps, but enthusiasts in brain at least, if not in heart—recognising some isolated examples of such phenomena, admitted their truth while refusing to consider them as radiating from a common centre. Each of these was, then, bent on constructing a science out of a simple fact. Hence arose demonology, judicial astrology, the black arts, in short, every form of divination founded on circumstances that were essentially transient, because they varied according to men's temperament, and to conditions that are still completely unknown.

But from these errors of the learned, and from the ecclesiastical trials under which fell so many martyrs to their own powers, startling evidence was derived of the prodigious faculties at the command of the Being of Action, which, according to Lambert, can abstract itself completely from the Being of Reaction, bursting its envelope, and piercing walls by its potent vision; a phenomenon known to the Hindoos, as missionaries tell us, by the name of *Tokeiad*; or again, by another faculty, can grasp in the brain, in spite of its closest convolutions, the ideas which are formed or forming there, and the whole of past consciousness.

'If apparitions are not impossible,' said Lambert, 'they must be due to a faculty of discerning the ideas which represent man in his purest essence, whose life, imperishable perhaps, escapes our grosser senses, though they may become perceptible to the inner being when it has reached a high degree of ecstasy, or a great perfection of vision.'

I know—though my remembrance is now vague—that Lambert, by following the results of Mind and Will step by step, after he had established their laws, accounted for a multitude of phenomena which, till then, had been regarded with reason as incomprehensible. Thus wizards, men possessed, those gifted with second sight, and demoniacs of every degree—the victims of the Middle Ages—became the subject of explanations so natural, that their very simplicity often seemed to me the seal of their truth. The marvellous gifts which the Church of Rome, jealous of all mysteries, punished with the stake, were, in Louis's opinion, the result of certain affinities between the constituent elements of matter and those of mind, which proceed from the same source. The man holding a hazel rod when he found a spring of water was guided by some antipathy or sympathy of which he was unconscious; nothing but the eccentricity of these phenomena could have availed to give some of them historic certainty.

Sympathies have rarely been proved; they afford a kind of pleasure which those who are so happy as to possess them rarely speak of unless they are abnormally singular, and even then only in the privacy of intimate intercourse, where everything is buried. But the antipathies that arise from the inversion of affinities have, very happily, been recorded when developed in famous men. Thus, Bayle had hysterics when he heard water splashing, Scaliger turned pale at the sight of water-cress, Erasmus was thrown into a fever by the smell of fish. These three antipathies were connected with water. The Duc d'Épernon fainted at the sight of a hare, Tycho-Brahe at that of a fox, Henri III. at the presence of a cat, the Marechal d'Albret at the sight of a wild hog; these antipathies were produced by animal emanations, and often took effect at a great distance. The Chevalier de Guise, Marie de' Medici, and many other persons, have felt faint at seeing a rose even in a painting. Lord Bacon, whether he were forewarned or no of an eclipse of the moon, always fell into a syncope while it lasted; and his vitality, suspended while the phenomenon lasted, was restored as soon as it was over without his feeling any further inconvenience. These effects of antipathy, all well authenticated, and chosen from among many which history has happened to preserve, are enough to give a clue to the sympathies which remain unknown.

This fragment of Lambert's investigations, which I remember from among his essays, will throw a light on the method on which he worked. I need not emphasise the obvious connection between this theory and the collateral sciences projected by Gall and Lavater; they were its natural corollary; and every more or less scientific brain will discern the ramifications by which it is inevitably connected with the phrenological observations of one and the speculations on physiognomy of the other.

Mesmer's discovery, so important, though as yet so little appreciated, was also embodied in a single section

of this treatise, though Louis did not know the Swiss doctor's writings—which are few and brief.

A simple and logical inference from these principles led him to perceive that the will might be accumulated by a contractile effort of the inner man, and then, by another effort, projected, or even imparted, to material objects. Thus, the whole force of a man must have the property of reacting on other men, and of infusing into them an essence foreign to their own, if they could not protect themselves against such an aggression. The evidence of this theorem of the science of humanity is, of course, very multifarious; but there is nothing to establish it beyond question. We have only the notorious disaster of Marius and his harangue to the Cimbrian commanded to kill him, or the august injunction of a mother to the Lion of Florence, in historic proof of instances of such lightning flashes of mind. To Lambert, then, Will and Thought were *living forces*; and he spoke of them in such a way as to impress his belief on the hearer. To him these two forces were, in a way, visible, tangible. Thought was slow or alert, heavy or nimble, light or dark; he ascribed to it all the attributes of an active agent, and thought of it as rising, resting, waking, expanding, growing old, shrinking, becoming atrophied, or resuscitating; he described its life, and specified all its actions by the strangest words in our language, speaking of its spontaneity, its strength, and all its qualities with a kind of intuition which enabled him to recognise all the manifestations of its substantial existence.

'Often,' said he, 'in the midst of quiet and silence, when our inner faculties are dormant, when we have given ourselves up to sweet repose, when a sort or darkness reigns within us, and we are lost in the contemplation of things outside us, an idea suddenly flies forth, and rushes with the swiftness of lightning across the infinite space which our inner vision allows us to

perceive. This radiant idea, springing into existence like a will-o'-the-wisp, dies out never to return; an ephemeral life, like that of babes who give their parents such infinite joy and sorrow; a sort of still-born blossom in the fields of the mind. Sometimes an idea, instead of springing forcibly into life and dying unembodied, dawns gradually, hovers in the unknown limbo of the organs where it has its birth; exhausts us by long gestation, develops, is itself fruitful, grows outwardly in all the grace of youth and the promising attributes of a long life; it can endure the closest inspection, invites it, and never tires the sight; the investigation it undergoes commands the admiration we give to works slowly elaborated. Sometimes ideas are evolved in a swarm; one brings another; they come linked together; they vie with each other; they fly in clouds, wild and headlong. Again, they rise up pallid and misty, and perish for want of strength or of nutrition; the vital force is lacking. Or again, on certain days, they rush down into the depths to light up that immense obscurity; they terrify us and leave the soul dejected.

'Ideas are a complete system within us, resembling a natural kingdom, a sort of flora, of which the iconography will one day be outlined by some man who will perhaps be accounted a madman.

'Yes, within us and without, everything testifies to the livingness of those exquisite creations, which I compare with flowers in obedience to some unutterable revelation of their true nature!

'Their being produced as the final cause of man is, after all, not more amazing than the production of perfume and colour in a plant. Perfumes *are* ideas, perhaps!

'When we consider that the line where flesh ends and the nail begins contains the invisible and inexplicable mystery of the constant transformation of a fluid into horn, we must confess that nothing is impossible in the marvellous modifications of human tissue.

'And are there not in our inner nature phenomena of weight and motion comparable to those of physical nature? Suspense, to choose an example vividly familiar to everybody, is painful only as a result of the law in virtue of which the weight of a body is multiplied by its velocity. The weight of the feeling produced by suspense increases by the constant addition of past pain to the pain of the moment.

'And then, to what, unless it be to the electric fluid, are we to attribute the magic by which the Will enthrones itself so imperiously in the eye to demolish obstacles at the behest of genius, thunders in the voice, or filters, in spite of dissimulation, through the human frame? The current of that sovereign fluid, which, in obedience to the high pressure of thought or of feeling, flows in a torrent or is reduced to a mere thread, and collects to flash in lightnings, is the occult agent to which are due the evil or the beneficent efforts of Art and Passion—intonation of voice, whether harsh or suave, terrible, lascivious, horrifying or seductive by turns, thrilling the heart, the nerves, or the brain at our will; the marvels of the touch, the instrument of the mental transfusions of a myriad artists, whose creative fingers are able, after passionate study, to reproduce the forms of nature; or, again, the infinite gradations of the eye from dull inertia to the emission of the most terrifying gleams.

'By this system God is bereft of none of His rights. Mind, as a form of matter, has brought me a new conviction of His greatness.'

After hearing him discourse thus, after receiving into my soul his look like a ray of light, it was difficult not to be dazzled by his conviction and carried away by his arguments. The Mind appeared to me as a purely physical power, surrounded by its innumerable progeny. It was a new conception of humanity under a new form.

This brief sketch of the laws which, as Lambert maintained, constitute the formula of our intellect, must

suffice to give a notion of the prodigious activity of his spirit feeding on itself. Louis had sought for proofs of his theories in the history of great men, whose lives, as set forth by their biographers, supply very curious particulars as to the operation of their understanding. His memory allowed him to recall such facts as might serve to support his statements ; he had appended them to each chapter in the form of demonstrations, so as to give to many of his theories an almost mathematical certainty. The works of Cardan, a man gifted with singular powers of insight, supplied him with valuable materials. He had not forgotten that Apollonius of Tyana had, in Asia, announced the death of the tyrant with every detail of his execution, at the very hour when it was taking place in Rome ; nor that Plotinus, when far away from Porphyrius, was aware of his friend's intention to kill himself, and flew to dissuade him ; nor the incident in the last century, proved in the face of the most incredulous mockery ever known—an incident most surprising to men who were accustomed to regard doubt as a weapon against the fact alone, but simple enough to believers—the fact that Alphonzo-Maria di Liguori, Bishop of Saint-Agatha, administered consolations to Pope Ganganelli, who saw him, heard him, and answered him, while the Bishop himself, at a great distance from Rome, was in a trance at home, in the chair where he commonly sat on his return from Mass. On recovering consciousness, he saw all his attendants kneeling beside him, believing him to be dead : 'My friends,' said he, 'the Holy Father is just dead.' Two days later a letter confirmed the news. The hour of the Pope's death coincided with that when the Bishop had been restored to his natural state.

Nor had Lambert omitted the yet more recent adventure of an English girl who was passionately attached to a sailor, and set out from London to seek him. She found him, without a guide, making her way alone in the

North American wilderness, reaching him just in time to save his life.

Louis had found confirmatory evidence in the mysteries of the ancients, in the acts of the martyrs—in which glorious instances may be found of the triumph of human will, in the demonology of the Middle Ages, in criminal trials and medical researches; always selecting the real fact, the probable phenomenon, with admirable sagacity.

All this rich collection of scientific anecdotes, culled from so many books, most of them worthy of credit, served no doubt to wrap parcels in; and this work, which was curious, to say the least of it, as the outcome of a most extraordinary memory, was doomed to destruction.

Among the various cases which added to the value of Lambert's *Treatise* was an incident that had taken place in his own family, of which he had told me before he wrote his essay. This fact, bearing on the post-existence of the inner man, if I may be allowed to coin a new word for a phenomenon hitherto nameless, struck me so forcibly that I have never forgotten it. His father and mother were being forced into a lawsuit, of which the loss would leave them with a stain on their good name, the only thing they had in the world. Hence their anxiety was very great when the question first arose as to whether they should yield to the plaintiff's unjust demands, or should defend themselves against him. The matter came under discussion one autumn evening, before a turf fire in the room used by the tanner and his wife. Two or three relations were invited to this family council, and among others Louis's maternal great-grandfather, an old labourer, much bent, but with a venerable and dignified countenance, bright eyes, and a bald, yellow head, on which grew a few locks of thin, white hair. Like the Obi of the Negroes, or the Sagamore of the Indian savage, he was a sort of oracle, consulted on important occasions. His land was tilled by his grand-

children, who fed and served him; he predicted rain and fine weather, and told them when to mow the hay and gather the crops. The barometric exactitude of his forecasts was quite famous, and added to the confidence and respect he inspired. For whole days he would sit immovable in his armchair. This state of rapt meditation often came upon him since his wife's death; he had been attached to her with the truest and most faithful affection.

This discussion was held in his presence, but he did not seem to give much heed to it.

'My children,' said he, when he was asked for his opinion, 'this is too serious a matter for me to decide on alone. I must go and consult my wife.'

The old man rose, took his stick, and went out, to the great astonishment of the others, who thought him daft. He presently came back and said—

'I did not have to go so far as the graveyard; your mother came to meet me; I found her by the brook. She tells me that you will find some receipts in the hands of a notary at Blois, which will enable you to gain your suit.'

The words were spoken in a firm tone; the old man's demeanour and countenance showed that such an apparition was habitual with him. In fact, the disputed receipts were found, and the lawsuit was not attempted.

This event, under his father's roof and to his own knowledge, when Louis was nine years old, contributed largely to his belief in Swedenborg's miraculous visions, for in the course of that philosopher's life he repeatedly gave proofs of the power of sight developed in his Inner Being. As he grew older, and as his intelligence was developed, Lambert was naturally led to seek in the laws of nature for the causes of the miracle which, in his childhood, had captivated his attention. What name can be given to the chance which brought within his ken so many facts and books bearing on such phenomena,

and made him the principal subject and actor in such marvellous manifestations of mind?

If Lambert had no other title to fame than the fact of his having formulated, in his sixteenth year, such a psychological dictum as this:—'The events which bear witness to the action of the human race, and are the outcome of its intellect, have causes by which they are preconceived, as our actions are accomplished in our mind before they are reproduced by the outer man; presentiments or predictions are the perception of these causes'—I think we may deplore in him a genius equal to Pascal, Lavoisier, or Laplace. His chimerical notions about angels perhaps overruled his work too long; but was it not in trying to make gold that the alchemists unconsciously created chemistry? At the same time, Lambert, at a later period, studied comparative anatomy, physics, geometry, and other sciences bearing on his discoveries, and this was undoubtedly with the purpose of collecting facts and submitting them to analysis—the only torch that can guide us through the dark places of the most inscrutable work of nature. He had too much good sense to dwell among the clouds of theories which can all be expressed in a few words. In our day, is not the simplest demonstration based on facts more highly esteemed than the most specious system though defended by more or less ingenious inductions? But as I did not know him at the period of his life when his cogitations were, no doubt, the most productive of results, I can only conjecture what the bent of his work must have been from that of his first efforts of thought.

It is easy to see where his *Treatise on the Will* was faulty. Though gifted already with the powers which characterise superior men, he was but a boy. His brain, though endowed with a great faculty for abstractions, was still full of the delightful beliefs that hover around youth. Thus his conception, while at some points it touched the ripest fruits of his genius, still, by many

more, clung to the smaller elements of its germs. To certain readers, lovers of poetry, what he chiefly lacked must have been a certain vein of interest.

But his work bore the stamp of the struggle that was going on in that noble Spirit between the two great principles of Spiritualism and Materialism, round which so many a fine genius has beaten its way without ever daring to amalgamate them. Louis, at first purely Spiritualist, had been irresistibly led to recognise the Material conditions of Mind. Confounded by the facts of analysis at the moment when his heart still gazed with yearning at the clouds that floated in Swedenborg's heaven, he had not yet acquired the necessary powers to produce a coherent system, compactly cast in a piece, as it were. Hence certain inconsistencies that have left their stamp even on the sketch here given of his first attempts. Still, incomplete as his work may have been, was it not the rough copy of a science of which he would have investigated the secrets at a later time, have secured the foundations, have examined, deduced, and connected the logical sequence?

Six months after the confiscation of the *Treatise on the Will* I left school. Our parting was unexpected. My mother, alarmed by a feverish attack which for some months I had been unable to shake off, while my inactive life induced symptoms of *coma*, carried me off at four or five hours' notice. The announcement of my departure reduced Lambert to dreadful dejection.

'Shall I ever see you again?' said he in his gentle voice, as he clasped me in his arms. 'You will live,' he went on, 'but I shall die. If I can, I will come back to you.'

Only the young can utter such words with the accent of conviction that gives them the impressiveness of prophecy, of a pledge, leaving a terror of its fulfilment. For a long time indeed I vaguely looked for the promised

apparition. Even now there are days of depression, of doubt, alarm, and loneliness, when I am forced to repel the intrusion of that sad parting, though it was not fated to be the last.

When I crossed the yard by which we left, Lambert was at one of the refectory windows to see me pass. By my request my mother obtained leave for him to dine with us at the inn, and in the evening I escorted him back to the fatal gate of the college. No lover and his mistress ever shed more tears at parting.

'Well, good-bye; I shall be left alone in this desert!' said he, pointing to the playground where two hundred boys were disporting themselves and shouting. 'When I come back half dead with fatigue from my long excursions through the fields of thought, on whose heart can I rest? I could tell you everything in a look. Who will understand me now?—Good-bye! I could wish I had never met you; I should not know all I am losing.'

'And what is to become of me?' said I. 'Is not my position a dreadful one? *I* have nothing here to uphold me!' and I slapped my forehead.

He shook his head with a gentle gesture, gracious and sad, and we parted.

At that time Louis Lambert was about five feet five inches in height; he grew no more. His countenance, which was full of expression, revealed his sweet nature. Divine patience, developed by harsh usage, and the constant concentration needed for his meditative life, had bereft his eyes of the audacious pride which is so attractive in some faces, and which had so shocked our masters. Peaceful mildness gave charm to his face, an exquisite serenity that was never marred by a tinge of irony or satire; for his natural kindliness tempered his conscious strength and superiority. He had pretty hands, very slender, and almost always moist. His frame was a marvel, a model for a sculptor; but our iron-grey uniform, with gilt buttons and knee-breeches, gave us

such an ungainly appearance that Lambert's fine proportions and firm muscles could only be appreciated in the bath. When we swam in our pool in the Loir, Louis was conspicuous by the whiteness of his skin, which was unlike the different shades of our schoolfellows' bodies mottled by the cold, or blue from the water. Gracefully formed, elegant in his attitudes, delicate in hue, never shivering after his bath, perhaps because he avoided the shade and always ran into the sunshine, Louis was like one of those cautious blossoms that close their petals to the blast and refuse to open unless to a clear sky. He ate little, and drank water only; either by instinct or by choice he was averse to any exertion that made a demand on his strength; his movements were few and simple, like those of Orientals or of savages, with whom gravity seems a condition of nature.

As a rule, he disliked everything that resembled any special care for his person. He commonly sat with his head a little inclined to the left, and so constantly rested his elbows on the table, that the sleeves of his coats were soon in holes.

To this slight picture of the outer man I must add a sketch of his moral qualities, for I believe I can now judge him impartially.

Though naturally religious, Louis did not accept the minute practices of the Roman ritual; his ideas were more intimately in sympathy with Saint Theresa and Fenelon, and several Fathers and certain Saints, who, in our day, would be regarded as heresiarchs or atheists. He was rigidly calm during the services. His own prayers went up in gusts, in aspirations, without any regular formality; in all things he gave himself up to nature, and would not pray, any more than he would think, at any fixed hour. In chapel he was equally apt to think of God or to meditate on some problem of philosophy.

To him Jesus Christ was the most perfect type of his system. *Et Verbum caro factum est* seemed a sublime statement intended to express the traditional formula of the Will, the Word, and the Act made visible. Christ's unconsciousness of His Death—having so perfected His inner Being by divine works, that one day the invisible form of it appeared to His disciples—and the other Mysteries of the Gospels, the magnetic cures wrought by Christ, and the gift of tongues, all to him confirmed his doctrine. I remember once hearing him say on this subject, that the greatest work that could be written nowadays was a History of the Primitive Church. And he never rose to such poetic heights as when, in the evening, as we conversed, he would enter on an inquiry into miracles worked by the power of Will during that great age of faith. He discerned the strongest evidence of his theory in most of the martyrdoms endured during the first century of our era, which he spoke of as *the great era of the Mind.*

'Do not the phenomena observed in almost every instance of the torments so heroically endured by the early Christians for the establishment of the faith, amply prove that Material force will never prevail against the force of Ideas or the Will of man?' he would say. 'From this effect, produced by the Will of all, each man may draw conclusions in favour of his own.'

I need say nothing of his views on poetry or history, nor of his judgment on the masterpieces of our language. There would be little interest in the record of opinions now almost universally held, though at that time, from the lips of a boy, they might seem remarkable. Louis was capable of the highest flights. To give a notion of his talents in two words, he could have written *Zadig* as wittily as Voltaire; he could have thought out the Dialogue between Sylla and Eucrates as powerfully as Montesquieu. His rectitude of character made him desire above all else in a work that it should bear the

stamp of utility; at the same time, his refined taste demanded novelty of thought as well as of form. One of his most remarkable literary observations, which will serve as a clue to all the others, and show the lucidity of his judgment, is this, which has ever dwelt in my memory, 'The Apocalypse is written ecstasy.' He regarded the Bible as a part of the traditional history of the antediluvian nations which had taken for its share the new humanity. He thought that the mythology of the Greeks was borrowed both from the Hebrew Scriptures and from the sacred Books of India, adapted after their own fashion by the beauty-loving Hellenes.

'It is impossible,' said he, 'to doubt the priority of the Asiatic Scriptures; they are earlier than our Sacred Books. The man who is candid enough to admit this historical fact sees the whole world expand before him. Was it not on the Asiatic highland that the few men took refuge who were able to escape the catastrophe that ruined our globe—if, indeed, men had existed before that cataclysm or shock? A serious query, the answer to which lies at the bottom of the sea. The anthropogony of the Bible is merely a genealogy of a swarm escaping from the human hive which settled on the mountainous slopes of Thibet between the summits of the Himalaya and the Caucasus.

'The character of the primitive ideas of that horde, called by its lawgiver the people of God, no doubt to secure its unity, and perhaps also to induce it to maintain his laws and his system of government—for the Books of Moses are a religious, political, and civil code—that character bears the authority of terror; convulsions of nature are interpreted with stupendous power as a vengeance from on high. In fact, since this wandering tribe knew none of the ease enjoyed by a community settled in a patriarchal home, their sorrows as pilgrims inspired them with none but gloomy poems, majestic but blood-stained. In the Hindoos, on the contrary, the

spectacle of the rapid recoveries of the natural world, and the prodigious effects of sunshine, which they were the first to recognise, gave rise to happy images of blissful love, to the worship of Fire and of the endless personifications of reproductive force. These fine fancies are lacking in the Book of the Hebrews. A constant need of self-preservation amid all the dangers and the lands they traversed to reach the Promised Land engendered their exclusive race-feeling and their hatred of all other nations.

'These three Scriptures are the archives of an engulfed world. Therein lies the secret of the extraordinary splendour of those languages and their myths. A grand human history lies beneath those names of men and places, and those fables which charm us so irresistibly, we know not why. Perhaps it is because we find in them the native air of renewed humanity.'

Thus, to him, this threefold literature included all the thoughts of man. Not a book could be written, in his opinion, of which the subject might not there be discerned in its germ. This view shows how learnedly he had pursued his early studies of the Bible, and how far they had led him. Hovering, as it were, over the heads of society, and knowing it solely from books, he could judge it coldly.

'The law,' said he, 'never puts a check on the enterprises of the rich and great, but crushes the poor, who, on the contrary, need protection.'

His kind heart did not therefore allow him to sympathise in political ideas; his system led rather to the passive obedience of which Jesus set the example. During the last hours of my life at Vendôme, Louis had ceased to feel the spur to glory; he had, in a way, had an abstract enjoyment of fame; and having opened it, as the ancient priests of sacrifice sought to read the future in the hearts of men, he had found nothing in the entrails of his chimera. Scorning a sentiment so

wholly personal: 'Glory,' said he, 'is but beatified egoism.'

Here, perhaps, before taking leave of this exceptional boyhood, I may pronounce judgment on it by a rapid glance.

A short time before our separation, Lambert said to me:—

'Apart from the general laws which I have formulated —and this, perhaps, will be my glory—laws which must be those of the human organism, the life of man is Movement determined in each individual by the pressure of some inscrutable influence—by the brain, the heart, or the sinews. All the innumerable modes of human existence result from the proportions in which these three generating forces are more or less intimately combined with the substances they assimilate in the environment they live in.'

He stopped short, struck his forehead, and exclaimed: 'How strange! In every great man whose portrait I have remarked, the neck is short. Perhaps nature requires that in them the heart should be nearer to the brain!'

Then he went on:—

'From that, a sum-total of action takes its rise which constitutes social life. The man of sinew contributes action or strength; the man of brain, genius; the man of heart, faith. But,' he added sadly, 'faith sees only the clouds of the sanctuary; the Angel alone has light.'

So, according to his own definitions, Lambert was all brain and all heart. It seems to me that his intellectual life was divided into three marked phases.

Under the impulsion, from his earliest years, of a precocious activity, due, no doubt, to some malady—or to some special perfection—of organism, his powers were concentrated on the functions of the inner senses and a superabundant flow of nerve-fluid. As a man of ideas, he craved to satisfy the thirst of his brain, to assimilate every idea. Hence his reading; and from his reading,

the reflections that gave him the power of reducing things to their simplest expression, and of absorbing them to study them in their essence. Thus, the advantages of this splendid stage, acquired by other men only after long study, were achieved by Lambert during his bodily childhood : a happy childhood, coloured by the studious joys of a born poet.

The point which most thinkers reach at last was to him the starting-point, whence his brain was to set out one day in search of new worlds of knowledge. Though as yet he knew it not, he had made for himself the most exacting life possible, and the most insatiably greedy. Merely to live, was he not compelled to be perpetually casting nutriment into the gulf he had opened in himself? Like some beings who dwell in the grosser world, might he not die of inanition for want of feeding abnormal and disappointed cravings? Was not this a sort of debauchery of the intellect which might lead to spontaneous combustion, like that of bodies saturated with alcohol?

I had seen nothing of this first phase of his brain-development; it is only now, at a later day, that I can thus give an account of its prodigious fruit and results. Lambert was now thirteen.

I was so fortunate as to witness the first stage of the second period. Lambert was cast into all the miseries of school-life—and that, perhaps, was his salvation—it absorbed the superabundance of his thoughts. After passing from concrete ideas to their purest expression, from words to their ideal import, and from that import to principles, after reducing everything to the abstract, to enable him to live he yearned for yet other intellectual creations. Quelled by the woes of school and the critical development of his physical constitution, he became thoughtful, dreamed of feeling, and caught a glimpse of new sciences—positively masses of ideas. Checked in his career, and not yet strong enough to

contemplate the higher spheres, he contemplated his inmost self. I then perceived in him the struggle of the Mind reacting on itself, and trying to detect the secrets of its own nature, like a physician who watches the course of his own disease.

At this stage of weakness and strength, of childish grace and superhuman powers, Louis Lambert is the creature who, more than any other, gave me a poetical and truthful image of the being we call an angel, always excepting one woman whose name, whose features, whose identity, and whose life I would fain hide from all the world, so as to be sole master of the secret of her existence, and to bury it in the depths of my heart.

The third phase I was not destined to see. It began when Lambert and I were parted, for he did not leave college till he was eighteen, in the summer of 1815. He had at that time lost his father and mother about six months before. Finding no member of his family with whom his soul could sympathise, expansive still, but, since our parting, thrown back on himself, he made his home with his uncle, who was also his guardian, and who, having been turned out of his benefice as a priest who had taken the oaths, had come to settle at Blois. There Louis lived for some time ; but consumed ere long by the desire to finish his incomplete studies, he came to Paris to see Madame de Staël, and to drink of science at its highest fount. The old priest, being very fond of his nephew, left Louis free to spend his whole little inheritance in his three years' stay in Paris, though he lived very poorly. This fortune consisted of but a few thousand francs.

Lambert returned to Blois at the beginning of 1820, driven from Paris by the sufferings to which the impecunious are exposed there. He must often have been a victim to the secret storms, the terrible rage of mind by which artists are tossed to judge from the only fact his

uncle recollected, and the only letter he preserved of all those which Louis Lambert wrote to him at that time, perhaps because it was the last and the longest.

To begin with the story. Louis one evening was at the Théâtre-Français, seated on a bench in the upper gallery, near to one of the pillars which, in those days, divided off the third row of boxes. On rising between the acts, he saw a young woman who had just come into the box next him. The sight of this lady, who was young, pretty, well dressed, in a low bodice no doubt, and escorted by a man for whom her face beamed with all the charms of love, produced such a terrible effect on Lambert's soul and senses, that he was obliged to leave the theatre. If he had not been controlled by some remaining glimmer of reason, which was not wholly extinguished by this first fever of burning passion, he might perhaps have yielded to the almost irresistible desire that came over him to kill the young man on whom the lady's looks beamed. Was not this a reversion, in the heart of the Paris world, to the savage passion that regards woman as its prey, an effect of animal instinct combining with the almost luminous flashes of a soul crushed under the weight of thought? In short, was it not the prick of the penknife so vividly imagined by the boy, felt by the man as the thunderbolt of his most vital craving—for love?

And now, here is the letter that depicts the state of his mind as it was struck by the spectacle of Parisian civilisation. His feelings, perpetually wounded no doubt in that whirlpool of self-interest, must always have suffered there; he probably had no friend to comfort him, no enemy to give tone to his life. Compelled to live in himself alone, having no one to share his subtle raptures, he may have hoped to solve the problem of his destiny by a life of ecstasy, adopting an almost vegetative attitude, like an anchorite of the early Church, and abdicating the empire of the intellectual world.

This letter seems to hint at such a scheme, which is a temptation to all lofty souls at periods of social reform. But is not this purpose, in some cases, the result of a vocation? Do not some of them endeavour to concentrate their powers by long silence, so as to emerge fully capable of governing the world by word or by deed? Louis must, assuredly, have found much bitterness in his intercourse with men, or have striven hard with Society in terrible irony, without extracting anything from it, before uttering so strident a cry, and expressing, poor fellow, the desire which satiety of power and of all earthly things has led even monarchs to indulge!

And perhaps, too, he went back to solitude to carry out some great work that was floating inchoate in his brain. We would gladly believe it as we read this fragment of his thoughts, betraying the struggle of his soul at the time when youth was ending and the terrible power of production was coming into being, to which we might have owed the works of the man.

This letter connects itself with the adventure at the theatre. The incident and the letter throw light on each other, body and soul were tuned to the same pitch. This tempest of doubts and asseverations, of clouds and of lightnings that flash before the thunder, ending by a starved yearning for heavenly illumination, throws such a light on the third phase of his education as enables us to understand it perfectly. As we read these lines, written at chance moments, taken up when the vicissitudes of life in Paris allowed, may we not fancy that we see an oak at that stage of its growth when its inner expansion bursts the tender green bark, covering it with wrinkles and cracks, when its majestic stature is in preparation—if indeed the lightnings of heaven and the axe of man shall spare it?

This letter, then, will close, alike for the poet and the philosopher, this portentous childhood and unappreciated youth. It finishes off the outline of this nature in its

germ. Philosophers will regret the foliage frost-nipped in the bud; but they will, perhaps, find the flowers expanding in regions far above the highest places of the earth.

'Paris, *September-October* 1819.

'Dear Uncle,—I shall soon be leaving this part of the world, where I could never bear to live. I find no one here who likes what I like, who works at my work, or is amazed at what amazes me. Thrown back on myself, I eat my heart out in misery. My long and patient study of Society here has brought me to melancholy conclusions, in which doubt predominates.

'Here, money is the mainspring of everything. Money is indispensable, even for going without money. But though that dross is necessary to any one who wishes to think in peace, I have not courage enough to make it the sole motive power of my thoughts. To make a fortune, I must take up a profession; in two words, I must, by acquiring some privilege of position or of self-advertisement, either legal or ingeniously contrived, purchase the right of taking day by day out of somebody else's purse a certain sum which, by the end of the year, would amount to a small capital; and this, in twenty years, would hardly secure an income of four or five thousand francs to a man who deals honestly. An advocate, a notary, a merchant, any recognised professional, has earned a living for his later days in the course of fifteen or sixteen years after ending his apprenticeship.

'But I have never felt fit for work of this kind. I prefer thought to action, an idea to a transaction, contemplation to activity. I am absolutely devoid of the constant attention indispensable to the making of a fortune. Any mercantile venture, any need for using other people's money would bring me to grief, and I should be ruined. Though I have nothing, at least at the moment, I owe nothing. The man who gives his life to the achievement of great things in the sphere of

intellect, needs very little; still, though twenty sous a day would be enough, I do not possess that small income for my laborious idleness. When I wish to cogitate, want drives me out of the sanctuary where my mind has its being. What is to become of me?

'I am not frightened at poverty. If it were not that beggars are imprisoned, branded, scorned, I would beg, to enable me to solve at my leisure the problems that haunt me. Still, this sublime resignation, by which I might emancipate my mind, through abstracting it from my body, would not serve my end. I should still need money to devote myself to certain experiments. But for that, I would accept the outward indigence of a sage possessed of both heaven and earth. A man need only never stoop, to remain lofty in poverty. He who struggles and endures, while marching on to a glorious end, presents a noble spectacle; but who can have the strength to fight here? We can climb cliffs, but it is unendurable to remain for ever tramping the mud. Everything here checks the flight of a spirit that strives towards the future.

'I should not be afraid of myself in a desert cave; I am afraid of myself here. In the desert I should be alone with myself, undisturbed; here man has a thousand wants which drag him down. You go out walking, absorbed in dreams; the voice of the beggar asking an alms brings you back to this world of hunger and thirst. You need money only to take a walk. Your organs of sense, perpetually wearied by trifles, never get any rest. The poet's sensitive nerves are perpetually shocked, and what ought to be his glory becomes his torment; his imagination is his cruellest enemy. The injured workman, the poor mother in childbed, the prostitute who has fallen ill, the foundling, the infirm and aged—even vice and crime here find a refuge and charity; but the world is merciless to the inventor, to the man who thinks. Here everything must

show an immediate and practical result. Fruitless attempts are mocked at, though they may lead to the greatest discoveries; the deep and untiring study that demands long concentration of every faculty is not valued here. The State might pay talent as it pays the bayonet; but it is afraid of being taken in by mere cleverness, as if genius could be counterfeited for any length of time.

'Ah, my dear uncle, when monastic solitude was destroyed, uprooted from its home at the foot of mountains, under green and silent shade, asylums ought to have been provided for those suffering souls who, by an idea, promote the progress of nations or prepare some new and fruitful development of science.

'*September 20th.*

'The love of study brought me hither, as you know. I have met really learned men, amazing for the most part; but the lack of unity in scientific work almost nullifies their efforts. There is no Head of instruction or of scientific research. At the Museum a professor argues to prove that another in the Rue Saint-Jacques talks nonsense. The lecturer at the College of Medicine abuses him of the Collège de France. When I first arrived, I went to hear an old Academician who taught five hundred youths that Corneille was a haughty and powerful genius; Racine, elegiac and graceful; Molière, inimitable; Voltaire, supremely witty; Bossuet and Pascal, incomparable in argument. A professor of philosophy may make a name by explaining how Plato is Platonic. Another discourses on the history of words, without troubling himself about ideas. One explains Æschylus, another tells you that communes were communes, and neither more nor less. These original and brilliant discoveries, diluted to last several hours, constitute the higher education which is to lead to giant strides in human knowledge.

'If the Government could have an idea, I should suspect

it of being afraid of any real superiority, which, once roused, might bring Society under the yoke of an intelligent rule. Then nations would go too far and too fast; so professors are appointed to produce simpletons. How else can we account for a scheme devoid of method or any notion of the future?

'The *Institut* might be the central government of the moral and intellectual world; but it has been ruined lately by its subdivision into separate academies. So human science marches on, without a guide, without a system, and floats haphazard with no road traced out.

'This vagueness and uncertainty prevails in politics as well as in science. In the order of nature means are simple, the end is grand and marvellous; here in science, as in government, the means are stupendous, the end is mean. The force which in nature proceeds at an equal pace, and of which the sum is constantly being added to itself—the A + A from which everything is produced—is destructive in society. Politics, at the present time, place human forces in antagonism to neutralise each other, instead of combining them to promote their action to some definite end.

'Looking at Europe alone, from Cæsar to Constantine, from the puny Constantine to the great Attila, from the Huns to Charlemagne, from Charlemagne to Leo X., from Leo X. to Philip II., from Philip II. to Louis XIV.; from Venice to England, from England to Napoleon, from Napoleon to England, I see no fixed purpose in politics; its constant agitation has led to no progress.

'Nations leave witnesses to their greatness in monuments, and to their happiness in the welfare of individuals. Are modern monuments as fine as those of the ancients? I doubt it. The arts, which are the direct outcome of the individual, the products of genius or of handicraft, have not advanced much. The pleasures of Lucullus were as good as those of Samuel Bernard, of Beaujon, or

of the King of Bavaria. And then human longevity has diminished.

'Thus, to those who will be candid, man is still the same; might is still his only law, and success his only wisdom.

'Jesus Christ, Mahomet, and Luther only lent a different hue to the arena in which youthful nations disport themselves.

'No development of politics has hindered civilisation, with its riches, its manners, its alliance of the strong against the weak, its ideas, and its delights, from moving from Memphis to Tyre, from Tyre to Baalbek, from Tadmor to Carthage, from Carthage to Rome, from Rome to Constantinople, from Constantinople to Venice, from Venice to Spain, from Spain to England—while no trace is left of Memphis, of Tyre, of Carthage, of Rome, of Venice, or Madrid. The soul of those great bodies has fled. Not one of them has preserved itself from destruction, nor formulated this axiom: When the effect produced ceases to be in a ratio to its cause, disorganisation follows.

'The most subtle genius can discover no common bond between great social facts. No political theory has ever lasted. Governments pass away, as men do, without handing down any lesson, and no system gives birth to a system better than that which came before it. What can we say about politics when a Government directly referred to God perished in India and Egypt; when the rule of the Sword and of the Tiara are past; when Monarchy is dying; when the Government of the People has never been alive; when no scheme of intellectual power as applied to material interests has ever proved durable, and everything at this day remains to be done all over again, as it has been at every period when man has turned to cry out, "I am in torment!"

'The code, which is considered Napoleon's greatest achievement, is the most Draconian work I know of.

Territorial subdivision carried out to the uttermost, and its principle confirmed by the equal division of property generally, must result in the degeneracy of the nation and the death of the Arts and Sciences. The land, too much broken up, is cultivated only with cereals and small crops; the forests, and consequently the rivers, are disappearing; oxen and horses are no longer bred. Means are lacking both for attack and for resistance. If we should be invaded, the people must be crushed; it has lost its mainspring—its leaders. This is the history of deserts!

'Thus the science of politics has no definite principles, and it can have no fixity; it is the spirit of the hour, the perpetual application of strength proportioned to the necessities of the moment. The man who should foresee two centuries ahead would die on the place of execution, loaded with the imprecations of the mob, or else—which seems worse—would be lashed with the myriad whips of ridicule. Nations are but individuals, neither wiser nor stronger than man, and their destinies are identical. If we reflect on man, is not that to consider mankind?

'By studying the spectacle of society perpetually storm-tossed in its foundations as well as in its results, in its causes as well as in its actions, while philanthropy is but a splendid mistake, and progress is vanity, I have been confirmed in this truth: Life is within and not without us; to rise above men, to govern them, is only the part of an aggrandised schoolmaster; and those men who are capable of rising to the level whence they can enjoy a view of the world should not look at their own feet.

'*November 4th.*

'I am no doubt occupied with weighty thoughts, I am on the way to certain discoveries, an invincible power bears me toward a luminary which shone at an early age on the darkness of my moral life; but what name can I

give to the power that ties my hands and shuts my mouth, and drags me in a direction opposite to my vocation? I must leave Paris, bid farewell to the books in the libraries, those noble centres of illumination, those kindly and always accessible sages, and the younger geniuses with whom I sympathise. Who is it that drives me away? Chance or Providence?

'The two ideas represented by those words are irreconcilable. If Chance does not exist, we must admit fatalism, that is to say, the compulsory co-ordination of things under the rule of a general plan. Why then do we rebel? If man is not free, what becomes of the scaffolding of his moral sense? Or, if he can control his destiny, if by his own free-will he can interfere with the execution of the general plan, what becomes of God?

'Why did I come here? If I examine myself, I find the answer: I find in myself axioms that need developing. But why then have I such vast faculties without being suffered to use them? If my suffering could serve as an example, I could understand it; but no, I suffer unknown.

'This is perhaps as much the act of Providence as the fate of the flower that dies unseen in the heart of the virgin forest, where no one can enjoy its perfume or admire its splendour. Just as that blossom vainly sheds its fragrance to the solitude, so do I, here in a garret, give birth to ideas that no one can grasp.

'Yesterday evening I sat eating bread and grapes in front of my window with a young doctor named Meyraux. We talked as men do whom misfortune has joined in brotherhood, and I said to him—

'"I am going away; you are staying. Take up my ideas and develop them."

'"I cannot!" said he, with bitter regret; "my feeble health cannot stand so much work, and I shall die young of my struggle with penury."

'We looked up at the sky and grasped hands. We

first met at the Comparative Anatomy course, and in the galleries of the Museum, attracted thither by the same study—the unity of geological structure. In him this was the presentiment of genius sent to open a new path in the fallows of intellect; in me it was a deduction from a general system.

'My point is to ascertain the real relation that may exist between God and man. Is not this a need of the age? Without the highest assurance, it is impossible to put bit and bridle on the social factions that have been let loose by the spirit of scepticism and discussion, and which are now crying aloud: "Show us a way in which we may walk and find no pitfalls in our way!"

'You will wonder what comparative anatomy has to do with a question of such importance to the future of society. Must we not attain to the conviction that man is the end of all earthly means before we ask whether he too is not the means to some end? If man is bound up with everything, is there not something above him with which he again is bound up? If he is the end-all of the unexplained transmutations that lead up to him, must he not be also the link between the visible and invisible creations?

'The activity of the universe is not absurd; it must tend to an end, and that end is surely not a social body constituted as ours is! There is a fearful gulf between us and heaven. In our present existence we can neither be always happy nor always in torment; must there not be some tremendous change to bring about Paradise and Hell, two images without which God cannot exist to the mind of the vulgar? I know that a compromise was made by the invention of the Soul; but it is repugnant to me to make God answerable for human baseness, for our disenchantments, our aversions, our degeneracy.

'Again, how can we recognise as divine the principle within us which can be overthrown by a few glasses of rum? How conceive of immaterial faculties which

matter can conquer, and whose exercise is suspended by a grain of opium? How imagine that we shall be able to feel when we are bereft of the vehicles of sensation? Why must God perish if matter can be proved to think? Is the vitality of matter in its innumerable manifestations—the effect of its instincts—at all more explicable than the effects of the mind? Is not the motion given to the worlds enough to prove God's existence, without our plunging into absurd speculations suggested by pride? And if we pass, after our trials, from a perishable state of being to a higher existence, is not that enough for a creature that is distinguished from other creatures only by more perfect instincts? If in moral philosophy there is not a single principle which does not lead to the absurd, or cannot be disproved by evidence, is it not high time that we should set to work to seek such dogmas as are written in the innermost nature of things? Must we not reverse philosophical science?

'We trouble ourselves very little about the supposed void that must have pre-existed for us, and we try to fathom the supposed void that lies before us. We make God responsible for the future, but we do not expect Him to account for the past. And yet it is quite as desirable to know whether we have any roots in the past as to discover whether we are inseparable from the future.

'We have been Deists or Atheists in one direction only.

'Is the world eternal? Was the world created? We can conceive of no middle term between these two propositions; one, then, is true and the other false! Take your choice. Whichever it may be, God, as our reason depicts Him, must be deposed, and that amounts to denial. The world is eternal: then, beyond question, God has had it forced upon Him. The world was created: then God is an impossibility. How could He have subsisted through an eternity, not knowing that He

would presently want to create the world? How could He have failed to foresee all the results?

'Whence did He derive the essence of creation? Evidently from Himself. If, then, the world proceeds from God, how can you account for evil? That Evil should proceed from Good is absurd. If evil does not exist, what do you make of social life and its laws? On all hands we find a precipice! On every side a gulf in which reason is lost! Then social science must be altogether reconstructed.

'Listen to me, uncle; until some splendid genius shall have taken account of the obvious inequality of intellects and the general sense of humanity, the word God will be constantly arraigned, and Society will rest on shifting sands. The secret of the various moral zones through which man passes will be discovered by the analysis of the animal type as a whole. That animal type has hitherto been studied with reference only to its differences, not to its similitudes; in its organic manifestations, not in its faculties. Animal faculties are perfected in direct transmission, in obedience to laws which remain to be discovered. These faculties correspond to the forces which express them, and those forces are essentially material and divisible.

'Material faculties! Reflect on this juxtaposition of words. Is not this a problem as insoluble as that of the first communication of motion to matter—an unsounded gulf of which the difficulties were transposed rather than removed by Newton's system? Again, the universal assimilation of light by everything that exists on earth demands a new study of our globe. The same animal differs in the tropics of India and in the North. Under the angular or the vertical incidence of the sun's rays nature is developed the same, but not the same; identical in its principles, but totally dissimilar in its outcome. The phenomenon that amazes our eyes in the zoological world when we compare the butterflies of Brazil with

those of Europe, is even more startling in the world of Mind. A particular facial angle, a certain amount of brain convolutions, are indispensable to produce Columbus, Raphael, Napoleon, Laplace, or Beethoven; the sunless valley produces the cretin—draw your own conclusions. Why such differences, due to the more or less ample diffusion of light to men? The masses of suffering humanity, more or less active, fed, and enlightened, are a difficulty to be accounted for, crying out against God.

'Why in great joy do we always want to quit the earth? whence comes the longing to rise which every creature has known or will know? Motion is a great Soul, and its alliance with matter is just as difficult to account for as the origin of thought in man. In these days science is one; it is impossible to touch politics independent of moral questions, and these are bound up with scientific questions. It seems to me that we are on the eve of a great human struggle; the forces are there; only I do not see the General.

'*November* 25.

'Believe me, dear uncle, it is hard to give up the life that is in us without a pang. I am returning to Blois with a heavy grip at my heart; I shall die then, taking with me some useful truths. No personal interest debases my regrets. Is earthly fame a guerdon to those who believe that they will mount to a higher sphere?

'I am by no means in love with the two syllables *Lam* and *bert*; whether spoken with respect or with contempt over my grave, they can make no change in my ultimate destiny. I feel myself strong and energetic; I might become a power; I feel in myself a life so luminous that it might enlighten a world, and yet I am shut up in a sort of mineral, as perhaps indeed are the colours you admire on the neck of an Indian bird. I should need to embrace the whole world, to clasp and

re-create it; but those who have done this, who have thus embraced and remoulded it began—did they not?—by being a wheel in the machine. I can only be crushed. Mahomet had the sword; Jesus had the cross; I shall die unknown. I shall be at Blois for a day, and then in my coffin.

'Do you know why I have come back to Swedenborg after vast studies of all religions, and after proving to myself, by reading all the works published within the last sixty years by the patient English, by Germany, and by France, how deeply true were my youthful views about the Bible? Swedenborg undoubtedly epitomises all the religions—or rather the one religion—of humanity. Though forms of worship are infinitely various, neither their true meaning nor their metaphysical interpretation has ever varied. In short, man has, and has had, but one religion.

'Sivaism, Vishnuism, and Brahmanism, the three primitive creeds, originating as they did in Thibet, in the valley of the Indus, and on the vast plains of the Ganges, ended their warfare some thousand years before the birth of Christ by adopting the Hindoo Trimourti. The Trimourti is our Trinity. From this dogma Magianism arose in Persia; in Egypt, the African beliefs and the Mosaic law; the worship of the Cabiri, and the polytheism of Greece and Rome. While by this ramification of the Trimourti the Asiatic myths became adapted to the imaginations of various races in the lands they reached by the agency of certain sages whom men elevated to be demi-gods—Mithra, Bacchus, Hermes, Hercules, and the rest—Buddha, the great reformer of the three primeval religions, lived in India, and founded his Church there, a sect which still numbers two hundred millions more believers than Christianity can show, while it certainly influenced the powerful Will both of Jesus and of Confucius.

'Then Christianity raised her standard. Subsequently

Mahomet fused Judaism and Christianity, the Bible and the Gospel, in one book, the Koran, adapting them to the apprehension of the Arab race. Finally, Swedenborg borrowed from Magianism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Christian mysticism all the truth and divine beauty that those four great religious books hold in common, and added to them a doctrine, a basis of reasoning, that may be termed mathematical.

'Any man who plunges into those religious waters, of which the sources are not all known, will find proofs that Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus Christ, and Swedenborg had identical principles and aimed at identical ends.

'The last of them all, Swedenborg, will perhaps be the Buddha of the North. Obscure and diffuse as his writings are, we find in them the elements of a magnificent conception of society. His Theocracy is sublime, and his creed is the only acceptable one to superior souls. He alone brings man into immediate communion with God, he gives a thirst for God, he has freed the Majesty of God from the trappings in which other human dogmas have disguised Him. He left Him where He is, making His myriad creations and creatures gravitate towards Him through successive transformations which promise a more immediate and more natural future than the Catholic idea of Eternity. Swedenborg has absolved God from the reproach attaching to Him in the estimation of tender souls for the perpetuity of revenge to punish the sin of a moment—a system of injustice and cruelty.

'Each man may know for himself what hope he has of life eternal, and whether this world has any rational sense. I mean to make the attempt. And this attempt may save the world, just as much as the cross at Jerusalem or the sword at Mecca. These were both the offspring of the desert. Of the thirty-three years of Christ's life, we only know the history of nine; His

life of seclusion prepared Him for His life of glory. And I too crave for the desert !'

Notwithstanding the difficulties of the task, I have felt it my duty to depict Lambert's boyhood, the unknown life to which I owe the only happy hours, the only pleasant memories, of my early days. Excepting during those two years I had nothing but annoyances and weariness. Though some happiness was mine at a later time, it was always incomplete.

I have been diffuse, I know ; but in default of entering into the whole wide heart and brain of Louis Lambert—two words which inadequately express the infinite aspects of his inner life—it would be almost impossible to make the second part of his intellectual history intelligible—a phase that was unknown to the world and to me, but of which the mystical outcome was made evident to my eyes in the course of a few hours. Those who have not already dropped this volume, will, I hope, understand the events I still have to tell, forming as they do a sort of second existence lived by this creature—may I not say this creation ?—in whom everything was to be so extraordinary, even his end.

When Louis returned to Blois, his uncle was eager to procure him some amusement ; but the poor priest was regarded as a perfect leper in that godly-minded town. No one would have anything to say to a revolutionary who had taken the oaths. His society, therefore, consisted of a few individuals of what were then called liberal or patriotic, or constitutional opinions, on whom he would call for a rubber of whist or of boston.

At the first house where he was introduced by his uncle, Louis met a young lady, whose circumstances obliged her to remain in this circle, so contemned by those of the fashionable world, though her fortune was such as to make it probable that she might by and by

marry into the highest aristocracy of the province. Mademoiselle Pauline de Villenoix was sole heiress to the wealth amassed by her grandfather, a Jew named Salomon, who, contrary to the customs of his nation, had, in his old age, married a Christian and a Catholic. He had an only son, who was brought up in his mother's faith. At his father's death young Salomon purchased what was known at that time as a *savonnette à vilain* (literally *a cake of soap for a serf*), a small estate called Villenoix, which he contrived to get registered with a baronial title, and took its name. He died unmarried, but he left a natural daughter, to whom he bequeathed the greater part of his fortune, including the lands of Villenoix. He appointed one of his uncles, Monsieur Joseph Salomon, to be the girl's guardian. The old Jew was so devoted to his ward that he seemed willing to make great sacrifices for the sake of marrying her well. But Mademoiselle de Villenoix's birth, and the cherished prejudice against Jews that prevails in the provinces, would not allow of her being received in the very exclusive circle which, rightly or wrongly, considers itself noble, notwithstanding her own large fortune and her guardian's.

Monsieur Joseph Salomon was resolved that if she could not secure a country squire, his niece should go to Paris and make choice of a husband among the peers of France, liberal or monarchical; as to happiness, that he believed he could secure her by the terms of the marriage contract.

Mademoiselle de Villenoix was now twenty. Her remarkable beauty and gifts of mind were surer guarantees of happiness than those offered by money. Her features were of the purest type of Jewish beauty; the oval lines, so noble and maidenly, have an indescribable stamp of the ideal, and seem to speak of the joys of the East, its unchangeably blue sky, the glories of its lands, and the fabulous riches of life there. She had fine eyes, shaded

by deep eyelids, fringed with thick, curled lashes. Biblical innocence sat on her brow. Her complexion was of the pure whiteness of the Levite's robe. She was habitually silent and thoughtful, but her movements and gestures betrayed a quiet grace, as her speech bore witness to a woman's sweet and loving nature. She had not, indeed, the rosy freshness, the fruit-like bloom which blush on a girl's cheek during her careless years. Darker shadows, with here and there a redder vein, took the place of colour, symptomatic of an energetic temper and nervous irritability, such as many men do not like to meet with in a wife, while to others they are an indication of the most sensitive chastity and passion mingled with pride.

As soon as Louis saw Mademoiselle de Villenoix, he discerned the angel within. The richest powers of his soul, and his tendency to ecstatic reverie, every faculty within him was at once concentrated in boundless love, the first love of a young man, a passion which is strong indeed in all, but which in him was raised to incalculable power by the perennial ardour of his senses, the character of his ideas, and the manner in which he lived. This passion became a gulf, into which the hapless fellow threw everything; a gulf whither the mind dare not venture, since his, flexible and firm as it was, was lost there. There all was mysterious, for everything went on in that moral world, closed to most men, whose laws were revealed to him—perhaps to his sorrow.

When an accident threw me in the way of his uncle, the good man showed me into the room which Lambert had at that time lived in. I wanted to find some vestiges of his writings, if he should have left any. There, among his papers, untouched by the old man from that fine instinct of grief that characterises the aged, I found a number of letters, too illegible ever to have been sent to Mademoiselle de Villenoix. My familiarity with Lambert's writing enabled me in time to decipher the hieroglyphics

of this shorthand, the result of impatience and a frenzy of passion. Carried away by his feelings, he had written without being conscious of the irregularity of words too slow to express his thoughts. He must have been compelled to copy these chaotic attempts, for the lines often ran into each other; but he was also afraid perhaps of not having sufficiently disguised his feelings, and at first, at any rate, he had probably written his love-letters twice over.

It required all the fervency of my devotion to his memory, and the sort of fanaticism which comes of such a task, to enable me to divine and restore the meaning of the five letters that here follow. These documents, preserved by me with pious care, are the only material evidence of his overmastering passion. Mademoiselle de Villenoix has no doubt destroyed the real letters that she received, eloquent witnesses to the delirium she inspired.

The first of these papers, evidently a rough sketch, betrays by its style and by its length the many emendations, the heartfelt alarms, the innumerable terrors caused by a desire to please; the changes of expression and the hesitation between the whirl of ideas that beset a man as he indites his first love-letter—a letter he never will forget, each line the result of a reverie, each word the subject of long cogitation, while the most unbridled passion known to man feels the necessity of the most reserved utterance, and like a giant stooping to enter a hovel, speaks humbly and low, so as not to alarm a girl's soul.

No antiquary ever handled his palimpsests with greater respect than I showed in reconstructing these mutilated documents of such joy and suffering as must always be sacred to those who have known similar joy and grief.

I

'Mademoiselle, when you have read this letter, if you

ever should read it, my life will be in your hands, for I love you; and to me, the hope of being loved is life. Others, perhaps, ere now, have, in speaking of themselves, misused the words I must employ to depict the state of my soul; yet, I beseech you to believe in the truth of my expressions; though weak, they are sincere. Perhaps I ought not thus to proclaim my love. Indeed, my heart counselled me to wait in silence till my passion should touch you, that I might the better conceal it if its silent demonstrations should displease you; or till I could express it even more delicately than in words if I found favour in your eyes. However, after having listened for long to the coy fears that fill a youthful heart with alarms, I write in obedience to the instinct which drags useless lamentations from the dying.

'It has needed all my courage to silence the pride of poverty, and to overleap the barriers which prejudice erects between you and me. I have had to smother many reflections to love you in spite of your wealth; and as I write to you, am I not in danger of the scorn which women often reserve for professions of love, which they accept only as one more tribute of flattery? But we cannot help rushing with all our might towards happiness, or being attracted to the life of love as a plant is to the light; we must have been very unhappy before we can conquer the torment, the anguish, of those secret deliberations when reason proves to us by a thousand arguments how barren our yearning must be if it remains buried in our hearts, and when hopes bid us dare everything.

'I was happy when I admired you in silence; I was so lost in the contemplation of your beautiful soul, that only to see you left me hardly anything further to imagine. And I should not now have dared to address you if I had not heard that you were leaving. What misery has that one word brought upon me! Indeed, it is my despair that has shown me the extent of my

attachment—it is unbounded. Mademoiselle, you will never know—at least, I hope you may never know—the anguish of dreading lest you should lose the only happiness that has dawned on you on earth, the only thing that has thrown a gleam of light in the darkness of misery. I understood yesterday that my life was no more in myself, but in you. There is but one woman in the world for me, as there is but one thought in my soul. I dare not tell you to what a state I am reduced by my love for you. I would have you only as a gift from yourself; I must therefore avoid showing myself to you in all the attractiveness of dejection—for is it not often more impressive to a noble soul than that of good fortune? There are many things I may not tell you. Indeed, I have too lofty a notion of love to taint it with ideas that are alien to its nature. If my soul is worthy of yours, and my life pure, your heart will have a sympathetic insight, and you will understand me!

'It is the fate of man to offer himself to the woman who can make him believe in happiness; but it is your prerogative to reject the truest passion if it is not in harmony with the vague voices in your heart—that I know. If my lot, as decided by you, must be adverse to my hopes, Mademoiselle, let me appeal to the delicacy of your maiden soul and the ingenuous compassion of a woman to burn my letter. On my knees I beseech you to forget all! Do not mock at a feeling that is wholly respectful, and that is too deeply graven on my heart ever to be effaced. Break my heart, but do not rend it! Let the expression of my first love, a pure and youthful love, be lost in your pure and youthful heart! Let it die there as a prayer rises up to die in the bosom of God!

'I owe you much gratitude: I have spent delicious hours occupied in watching you, and giving myself up to the faint dreams of my life; do not crush these long but transient joys by some girlish irony. Be satisfied not to answer me. I shall know how to interpret your

silence ; you will see me no more. If I must be condemned to know for ever what happiness means, and to be for ever bereft of it ; if, like a banished angel, I am to cherish the sense of celestial joys while bound for ever to a world of sorrow—well, I can keep the secret of my love as well as that of my griefs.—And farewell !

'Yes, I resign you to God, to whom I will pray for you, beseeching Him to grant you a happy life ; for even if I am driven from your heart, into which I have crept by stealth, still I shall ever be near you. Otherwise, of what value would the sacred words be of this letter, my first and perhaps my last entreaty ? If I should ever cease to think of you, to love you whether in happiness or in woe, should I not deserve my punishment ?'

II

'You are not going away ! And I am loved ! I, a poor, insignificant creature ! My beloved Pauline, you do not yourself know the power of the look I believe in, the look you gave me to tell me that you had chosen me—you so young and lovely, with the world at your feet !

'To enable you to understand my happiness, I should have to give you a history of my life. If you had rejected me, all was over for me. I have suffered too much. Yes, my love for you, my comforting and stupendous love, was a last effort of yearning for the happiness my soul strove to reach—a soul crushed by fruitless labour, consumed by fears that make me doubt myself, eaten into by despair which has often urged me to die. No one in the world can conceive of the terrors my fateful imagination inflicts on me. It often bears me up to the sky, and suddenly flings me to earth again from prodigious heights. Deep-seated rushes of power, or some rare and subtle instance of peculiar lucidity, assure me now and then that I am capable of great things. Then

I embrace the universe in my mind, I knead, shape it, inform it, I comprehend it—or fancy that I do; then suddenly I awake—alone, sunk in blackest night, helpless and weak; I forget the light I saw but now, I find no succour; above all, there is no heart where I may take refuge.

'This distress of my inner life affects my physical existence. The nature of my character gives me over to the raptures of happiness as defenceless as when the fearful light of reflection comes to analyse and demolish them. Gifted as I am with the melancholy faculty of seeing obstacles and success with equal clearness, according to the mood of the moment, I am happy or miserable by turns.

'Thus, when first I met you, I felt the presence of an angelic nature, I breathed an air that was sweet to my burning breast, I heard in my soul the voice that never can be false, telling me that here was happiness; but perceiving all the barriers that divided us, I understood for the first time what worldly prejudices were; I understood the vastness of their pettiness, and these difficulties terrified me more than the prospect of happiness could delight me. At once I felt the awful reaction which casts my expansive soul back on itself; the smile you had brought to my lips suddenly turned to a bitter grimace, and I could only strive to keep calm, while my soul was boiling with the turmoil of contradictory emotions. In short, I experienced that gnawing pang to which twenty-three years of suppressed sighs and betrayed affections have not inured me.

'Well, Pauline, the look by which you promised that I should be happy suddenly warmed my vitality, and turned all my sorrows into joy. Now, I could wish that I had suffered more. My love is suddenly full-grown. My soul was a wide territory that lacked the blessing of sunshine, and your eyes have shed light on it. Beloved providence! you will be all in all to me, orphan as I am,

without a relation but my uncle. You will be my whole family, as you are my whole wealth, nay, the whole world to me. Have you not bestowed on me every gladness man can desire in that chaste—lavish—timid glance?

'You have given me incredible self-confidence and audacity. I can dare all things now. I came back to Blois in deep dejection. Five years of study in the heart of Paris had made me look on the world as a prison. I had conceived of vast schemes, and dared not speak of them. Fame seemed to me a prize for charlatans, to which a really noble spirit should not stoop. Thus, my ideas could only make their way by the assistance of a man bold enough to mount the platform of the press, and to harangue loudly the simpletons he scorns. This kind of courage I have not. I ploughed my way on, crushed by the verdict of the crowd, in despair at never making it hear me. I was at once too humble and too lofty! I swallowed my thoughts as other men swallow humiliations. I had even come to despise knowledge, blaming it for yielding no real happiness.

'But since yesterday I am wholly changed. For your sake I now covet every palm of glory, every triumph of success. When I lay my head on your knees, I could wish to attract to you the eyes of the whole world, just as I long to concentrate in my love every idea, every power that is in me. The most splendid celebrity is a possession that genius alone can create. Well, I can, at my will, make for you a bed of laurels. And if the silent ovation paid to science is not all you desire, I have within me the sword of the Word; I could run in the path of honour and ambition where others only crawl.

'Command me, Pauline; I will be whatever you will. My iron will can do anything—I am loved! Armed with that thought, ought not a man to sweep everything before him? The man who wants all can do all. If

you are the prize of success, I enter the lists to-morrow. To win such a look as that you bestowed on me, I would leap the deepest abyss. Through you I understand the fabulous achievements of chivalry and the most fantastic tales of the *Arabian Nights*. I can believe now in the most fantastic excesses of love, and in the success of a prisoner's wildest attempt to recover his liberty. You have aroused the thousand virtues that lay dormant within me—patience, resignation, all the powers of my heart, all the strength of my soul. I live by you and—heavenly thought!—for you. Everything now has a meaning for me in life. I understand everything, even the vanities of wealth.

'I find myself shedding all the pearls of the Indies at your feet; I fancy you reclining either on the rarest flowers, or on the softest tissues, and all the splendour of the world seems hardly worthy of you, for whom I would I could command the harmony and the light that are given out by the harps of seraphs and the stars of heaven! Alas! a poor, studious poet, I offer you in words treasures I cannot bestow; I can only give you my heart, in which you reign for ever. I have nothing else. But are there no treasures in eternal gratitude, in a smile whose expression will perpetually vary with perennial happiness, under the constant eagerness of my devotion to guess the wishes of your loving soul? Has not one celestial glance given us assurance of always understanding each other?

'I have a prayer now to be said to God every night—a prayer full of you: "Let my Pauline be happy!" And will you fill all my days as you now fill my heart?

'Farewell, I can but trust you to God alone!'

III

'Pauline! tell me if I can in any way have displeased you yesterday? Throw off the pride of heart which

inflicts on me the secret tortures that can be caused by one we love. Scold me if you will! Since yesterday, a vague, unutterable dread of having offended you pours grief on the life of feeling which you had made so sweet and so rich. The lightest veil that comes between two souls sometimes grows to be a brazen wall. There are no venial crimes in love! If you have the very spirit of that noble sentiment, you must feel all its pangs, and we must be unceasingly careful not to fret each other by some heedless word.

'No doubt, my beloved treasure, if there is any fault, it is in me. I cannot pride myself in the belief that I understand a woman's heart in all the expansion of its tenderness, all the grace of its devotedness; but I will always endeavour to appreciate the value of what you vouchsafe to show me of the secrets of yours.

'Speak to me! Answer me soon! The melancholy into which we are thrown by the idea of a wrong done is frightful; it casts a shroud over life, and doubts on everything.

'I spent this morning sitting on the bank by the sunken road, gazing at the turrets of Villenoix, not daring to go to our hedge. If you could imagine all I saw in my soul! What gloomy visions passed before me under the grey sky, whose cold sheen added to my dreary mood! I had dark presentiments! I was terrified lest I should fail to make you happy.

'I must tell you everything, my dear Pauline. There are moments when the spirit of vitality seems to abandon me. I feel bereft of all strength. Everything is a burthen to me; every fibre of my body is inert, every sense is flaccid, my sight grows dim, my tongue is paralysed, my imagination is extinct, desire is dead—nothing survives but my mere human vitality. At such times, though you were in all the splendour of your beauty, though you should lavish on me your subtlest smiles and tenderest words, an evil influence would blind

me, and distort the most ravishing melody into discordant sounds. At those times—as I believe—some argumentative demon stands before me, showing me the void beneath the most real possessions. This pitiless demon mows down every flower, and mocks at the sweetest feelings, saying: "Well—and then?" He mars the fairest work by showing me its skeleton, and reveals the mechanism of things while hiding the beautiful results.

'At those terrible moments, when the evil spirit takes possession of me, when the divine light is darkened in my soul without my knowing the cause, I sit in grief and anguish, I wish myself deaf and dumb, I long for death to give me rest. These hours of doubt and uneasiness are perhaps inevitable; at any rate, they teach me not to be proud after the flights which have borne me to the skies where I have gathered a full harvest of thoughts; for it is always after some long excursion in the vast fields of the intellect, and after the most luminous speculations, that I tumble, broken and weary, into this limbo. At such a moment, my angel, a wife would doubt my love for her—at any rate, she might. If she were capricious, ailing, or depressed, she would need the comforting overflow of ingenious affection, and I should not have a glance to bestow on her. It is my shame, Pauline, to have to tell you that at such times I could weep with you, but that nothing could make me smile.

'A woman can always conceal her troubles; for her child, or for the man she loves, she can laugh in the midst of suffering. And could not I, for you, Pauline, imitate the exquisite reserve of a woman? Since yesterday I have doubted by own power. If I could displease you once, if I failed once to understand you, I dread lest I should often be carried out of our happy circle by my evil demon. Supposing I were to have many of those dreadful moods, or that my unbounded love could not make up for the dark hours of my life—that I were doomed to remain such as I am?—Fatal doubts!

'Power is indeed a fatal possession if what I feel within me is power. Pauline, go! Leave me, desert me! Sooner would I endure every ill in life than endure the misery of knowing that you were unhappy through me.

'But, perhaps, the demon has had such empire over me only because I have had no gentle, white hands about me to drive him off. No woman has ever shed on me the balm of her affection; and I know not whether, if love should wave his pinions over my head in these moments of exhaustion, new strength might not be given to my spirit. This terrible melancholy is perhaps a result of my isolation, one of the torments of a lonely soul which pays for its hidden treasures with groans and unknown suffering. Those who enjoy little shall suffer little; immense happiness entails unutterable anguish!

'How terrible a doom! If it be so, must we not shudder for ourselves, we who are superhumanly happy? If nature sells us everything at its true value, into what pit are we not fated to fall? Ah! the most fortunate lovers are those who die together in the midst of their youth and love! How sad it all is! Does my soul foresee evil in the future? I examine myself, wondering whether there is anything in me that can cause you a moment's anxiety. I love you too selfishly perhaps? I shall be laying on your beloved head a burthen heavy out of all proportion to the joy my love can bring to your heart. If there dwells in me some inexorable power which I must obey—if I am compelled to curse when you pray, if some dark thought coerces me when I would fain kneel at your feet and play as a child, will you not be jealous of that wayward and tricky spirit?

'You understand, dearest heart, that what I dread is not being wholly yours; that I would gladly forego all the sceptres and the palms of the world to enshrine you in one eternal thought, to see a perfect life and an

exquisite poem in our rapturous love; to throw my soul into it, drown my powers, and wring from each hour the joys it has to give!

'Ah, my memories of love are crowding back upon me, the clouds of despair will lift. Farewell. I leave you now to be more entirely yours. My beloved soul, I look for a line, a word that may restore my peace of mind. Let me know whether I really grieved my Pauline, or whether some uncertain expression of her countenance misled me. I could not bear to have to reproach myself after a whole life of happiness, for ever having met you without a smile of love, a honeyed word. To grieve the woman I love—Pauline, I should count it a crime. 'Tell me the truth, do not put me off with some magnanimous subterfuge, but forgive me without cruelty.'

FRAGMENT.

'Is so perfect an attachment happiness? Yes, for years of suffering would not pay for an hour of love.

'Yesterday, your sadness, as I suppose, passed into my soul as swiftly as a shadow falls. Were you sad or suffering? I was wretched. Whence came my distress? Write to me at once. Why did I not know it? We are not yet completely one in mind. At two leagues' distance or at a thousand I ought to feel your pains and sorrows. I shall not believe that I love you till my life is so bound up with yours that our life is one, till our hearts, our thoughts are one. I must be where you are, see what you see, feel what you feel, be with you in thought. Did not I know, at once, that your carriage had been overthrown and you were bruised? But on that day I had been with you, I had never left you, I could see you. When my uncle asked me what made me turn so pale, I answered at once, "Mademoiselle de Villenoix has had a fall."

'Why, then, yesterday, did I fail to read your soul?

Did you wish to hide the cause of your grief? However, I fancied I could feel that you were arguing in my favour, though in vain, with that dreadful Salomon, who freezes my blood. That man is not of our heaven.

'Why do you insist that our happiness, which has no resemblance to that of other people, should conform to the laws of the world? And yet I delight too much in your bashfulness, your religion, your superstitions, not to obey your lightest whim. What you do must be right; nothing can be purer than your mind, as nothing is lovelier than your face, which reflects your divine soul.

'I shall wait for a letter before going along the lanes to meet the sweet hour you grant me. Oh! if you could know how the sight of those turrets makes my heart throb when I see them edged with light by the moon, our only confidante.'

IV

'Farewell to glory, farewell to the future, to the life I had dreamed of! Now, my well-beloved, my glory is that I am yours, and worthy of you; my future lies entirely in the hope of seeing you; and is not my life summed up in sitting at your feet, in lying under your eyes, in drawing deep breaths in the heaven you have created for me? All my powers, all my thoughts must be yours, since you could speak those thrilling words, "Your sufferings must be mine!" Should I not be stealing some joys from love, some moments from happiness, some experiences from your divine spirit, if I gave my hours to study—ideas to the world and poems to the poets? Nay, nay, my very life, I will treasure everything for you; I will bring to you every flower of my soul. Is there anything fine enough, splendid enough, in all the resources of the world or of intellect, to do honour to a heart so rich, so pure as yours—the heart to

which I dare now and again to unite my own? Yes, now and again, I dare believe that I can love as much as you do.

'And yet, no; you are the angel-woman; there will always be a greater charm in the expression of your feelings, more harmony in your voice, more grace in your smile, more purity in your looks than in mine. Let me feel that you are the creature of a higher sphere than that I live in; it will be your pride to have descended from it; mine, that I should have deserved you; and you will not perhaps have fallen too far by coming down to me in my poverty and misery. Nay, if a woman's most glorious refuge is in a heart that is wholly her own, you will always reign supreme in mine. Not a thought, not a deed, shall ever pollute this heart, this glorious sanctuary, so long as you vouchsafe to dwell in it—and will you not dwell in it for ever? Did you not enchant me by the words, "Now and for ever"? *Nunc et semper!* And I have written these words of our ritual below your portrait—words worthy of you, as they are of God. He is *nunc et semper*, as my love is.

'Never, no, never, can I exhaust that which is immense, infinite, unbounded—and such is the feeling I have for you; I have imagined its immeasurable extent, as we measure space by the dimensions of one of its parts. I have had ineffable joys, whole hours filled with delicious meditation, as I have recalled a single gesture or the tone of a word of yours. Thus there will be memories of which the magnitude will overpower me, if the reminiscence of a sweet and friendly interview is enough to make me shed tears of joy, to move and thrill my soul, and to be an inexhaustible wellspring of gladness. Love is the life of angels!

'I can never, I believe, exhaust my joy in seeing you. This rapture, the least fervid of any, though it never can last long enough, has made me apprehend the eternal contemplation in which seraphs and spirits abide in the

presence of God; nothing can be more natural, if from His essence there emanates a light as fruitful of new emotions as that of your eyes is, of your imposing brow, and your beautiful countenance—the image of your soul. Then, the soul, our second self, whose pure form can never perish, makes our love immortal. I would there were some other language than that I use to express to you the ever-new ecstasy of my love; but since there is one of our own creating, since our looks are living speech, must we not meet face to face to read in each other's eyes those questions and answers from the heart, that are so living, so penetrating, that one evening you could say to me, "Be silent!" when I was not speaking. Do you remember it, dear life?

'When I am away from you in the darkness of absence, am I not reduced to use human words, too feeble to express heavenly feelings? But words at any rate represent the marks those feelings leave in my soul, just as the word *God* imperfectly sums up the notions we form of that mysterious First Cause. But, in spite of the subtleties and infinite variety of language, I have no words that can express to you the exquisite union by which my life is merged into yours whenever I think of you.

'And with what word can I conclude when I cease writing to you, and yet do not part from you? What can *farewell* mean, unless in death? But is death a farewell? Would not my spirit be then more closely one with yours? Ah! my first and last thought; formerly I offered you my heart and life on my knees; now what fresh blossoms of feeling can I discover in my soul that I have not already given you? It would be a gift of a part of what is wholly yours.

'Are you my future? How deeply I regret the past! I would I could have back all the years that are ours no more, and give them to you to reign over, as you do over my present life. What indeed was that time when I

knew you not? It would be a void but that I was so wretched.'

FRAGMENT.

'Beloved angel, how delightful last evening was! How full of riches your dear heart is! And is your love endless, like mine? Each word brought me fresh joy, and each look made it deeper. The placid expression of your countenance gave our thoughts a limitless horizon. It was all as infinite as the sky, and as bland as its blue. The refinement of your adored features repeated itself by some inexplicable magic in your pretty movements and your least gestures. I knew that you were all graciousness, all love, but I did not know how variously graceful you could be. Everything combined to urge me to tender solicitations, to make me ask the first kiss that a woman always refuses, no doubt that it may be snatched from her. You, dear soul of my life, will never guess beforehand what you may grant to my love, and will yield perhaps without knowing it! You are utterly true, and obey your heart alone.

'The sweet tones of your voice blended with the tender harmonies that filled the quiet air, the cloudless sky. Not a bird piped, not a breeze whispered—solitude, you, and I. The motionless leaves did not quiver in the beautiful sunset hues which are both light and shadow. You felt that heavenly poetry—you who experienced so many various emotions, and who so often raised your eyes to heaven to avoid answering me. You who are proud and saucy, humble and masterful, who give yourself to me so completely in spirit and in thought, and evade the most bashful caress. Dear witcheries of the heart! They ring in my ears; they sound and play there still. Sweet words but half spoken, like a child's speech, neither promise nor confession, but allowing love to cherish its fairest hopes without fear or torment! How pure a memory for life! What a free

blossoming of all the flowers that spring from the soul, which a mere trifle can blight, but which, at that moment, everything warmed and expanded.

'And it will be always so, will it not, my beloved? As I recall, this morning, the fresh and living delights revealed to me in that hour, I am conscious of a joy which makes me conceive of true love as an ocean of everlasting and ever-new experiences, into which we may plunge with increasing delight. Every day, every word, every kiss, every glance, must increase it by its tribute of past happiness. Hearts that are large enough never to forget must live every moment in their past joys as much as in those promised by the future. This was my dream of old, and now it is no longer a dream! Have I not met on this earth with an angel who has made me know all its happiness, as a reward, perhaps, for having endured all its torments? Angel of heaven, I salute thee with a kiss.

'I shall send you this hymn of thanksgiving from my heart, I owe it to you; but it can hardly express my gratitude or the morning worship my heart offers up day by day to her who epitomised the whole gospel of the heart in this divine word: "Believe."

V

'What! no further difficulties, dearest heart! We shall be free to belong to each other every day, every hour, every minute, and for ever! We may be as happy for all the days of our life as we now are by stealth, at rare intervals! Our pure, deep feelings will assume the expression of the thousand fond acts I have dreamed of. For me your little foot will be bared, you will be wholly mine! Such happiness kills me; it is too much for me. My head is too weak, it will burst with the vehemence of my ideas. I cry and I laugh—I am possessed! Every joy is as an arrow of flame; it pierces and burns

me. In fancy you rise before my eyes, ravished and dazzled by numberless and capricious images of delight.

'In short, our whole future life is before me—its torrents, its still places, its joys; it seethes, it flows on, it lies sleeping; then again it awakes fresh and young. I see myself and you side by side, walking with equal pace, living in the same thought; each dwelling in the other's heart, understanding each other, responding to each other as an echo catches and repeats a sound across wide distances.

'Can life be long when it is thus consumed hour by hour? Shall we not die in a first embrace? What if our souls have already met in that sweet evening kiss which almost overpowered us—a feeling kiss, but the crown of my hopes, the ineffectual expression of all the prayers I breathe while we are apart, hidden in my soul like remorse?

'I, who would creep back and hide in the hedge only to hear your footsteps as you went homewards—I may henceforth admire you at my leisure, see you busy, moving, smiling, prattling! An endless joy! You cannot imagine all the gladness it is to me to see you going and coming; only a man can know that deep delight. Your least movement gives me greater pleasure than a mother even can feel as she sees her child asleep or at play. I love you with every kind of love in one. The grace of your least gesture is always new to me. I fancy I could spend whole nights breathing your breath; I would I could steal into every detail of your life, be the very substance of your thoughts—be your very self.

'Well, we shall, at any rate, never part again! No human alloy shall ever disturb our love, infinite in its phases and as pure as all things are which are One—our love, vast as the sea, vast as the sky! You are mine! all mine! I may look into the depths of your eyes to read the sweet soul that alternately hides and shines there, to anticipate your wishes.

'My best-beloved, listen to some things I have never

yet dared to tell you, but which I may confess to you now. I felt a certain bashfulness of soul which hindered the full expression of my feelings, so I strove to shroud them under the garb of thoughts. But now I long to lay my heart bare before you, to tell you of the ardour of my dreams, to reveal the boiling demands of my senses, excited, no doubt, by the solitude in which I have lived, perpetually fired by conceptions of happiness, and aroused by you, so fair in form, so attractive in manner. How can I express to you my thirst for the unknown rapture of possessing an adored wife, a rapture to which the union of two souls by love must give frenzied intensity. Yes, my Pauline, I have sat for hours in a sort of stupor caused by the violence of my passionate yearning, lost in the dream of a caress as though in a bottomless abyss. At such moments my whole vitality, my thoughts and powers, are merged and united in what I must call desire, for lack of a word to express that nameless delirium.

'And I may confess to you now that one day, when I would not take your hand when you offered it so sweetly—an act of melancholy prudence that made you doubt my love—I was in one of those fits of madness when a man could commit a murder to possess a woman. Yes, if I had felt the exquisite pressure you offered me as vividly as I heard your voice in my heart, I know not to what lengths my passion might not have carried me. But I can be silent, and suffer a great deal. Why speak of this anguish when my visions are to become realities? It will be in my power now to make life one long love-making!

'Dearest love, there is a certain effect of light on your black hair which could rivet me for hours, my eyes full of tears, as I gazed at your sweet person, were it not that you turn away and say, "For shame; you make me quite shy!"

'To-morrow, then, our love is to be made known! Oh, Pauline! the eyes of others, the curiosity of

strangers, weigh on my soul. Let us go to Villenoix, and stay there far from every one. I should like no creature in human form to intrude into the sanctuary where you are to be mine; I could even wish that, when we are dead, it should cease to exist—should be destroyed. Yes; I would fain hide from all nature a happiness which we alone can understand, alone can feel, which is so stupendous that I throw myself into it only to die—it is a gulf!

'Do not be alarmed by the tears that have wetted this page; they are tears of joy. My only blessing, we need never part again!'

In 1823 I travelled from Paris to Touraine by *diligence.* At Mer we took up a passenger for Blois. As the guard put him into that part of the coach where I had my seat, he said jestingly—

'You will not be crowded, Monsieur Lefebvre!'—I was, in fact, alone.

On hearing this name, and seeing a white-haired old man, who looked eighty at least, I naturally thought of Lambert's uncle. After a few ingenious questions, I discovered that I was not mistaken. The good man had been looking after his vintage at Mer, and was returning to Blois. I then asked for some news of my old 'chum.' At the first word, the old priest's face, as grave and stern already as that of a soldier who has gone through many hardships, became more sad and dark; the lines on his forehead were slightly knit, he set his lips, and said, with a suspicious glance—

'Then you have never seen him since you left the College?'

'Indeed, I have not,' said I. 'But we are equally to blame for our forgetfulness. Young men, as you know, lead such an adventurous and storm-tossed life when they leave their school-forms, that it is only by meeting that they can be sure of an enduring affection. However, a reminiscence of youth sometimes comes as a

reminder, and it is impossible to forget entirely, especially when two lads have been such friends as we were. We went by the name of the Poet-and-Pythagoras.'

I told him my name; when he heard it, the worthy man grew gloomier than ever.

'Then you have not heard his story?' said he. 'My poor nephew was to be married to the richest heiress in Blois; but the day before his wedding he went mad.'

'Lambert! Mad!' cried I in dismay. 'But from what cause? He had the finest memory, the most strongly-constituted brain, the soundest judgment, I ever met with. Really a great genius—with too great a passion for mysticism perhaps; but the kindest heart in the world. Something most extraordinary must have happened?'

'I see you knew him well,' said the priest.

From Mer, till we reached Blois, we talked only of my poor friend, with long digressions, by which I learned the facts I have already related in the order of their interest. I confessed to his uncle the character of our studies and of his nephew's predominant ideas; then the old man told me of the events that had come into Lambert's life since our parting. From Monsieur Lefebvre's account, Lambert had betrayed some symptoms of madness before his marriage; but they were such as are common to men who love passionately, and seemed to me less startling when I knew how vehement his love had been and when I saw Mademoiselle de Villenoix. In the country, where ideas are scarce, a man overflowing with original thought and devoted to a system, as Louis was, might well be regarded as eccentric, to say the least. His language would, no doubt, seem the stranger because he so rarely spoke. He would say, 'That man does not dwell in my heaven,' where any one else would have said, 'We are not made on the same pattern.' Every clever man has his own quirks of speech. The broader his genius, the more conspicuous are the singularities which constitute the various degrees of eccen-

tricity. In the country an eccentric man is at once set down as half mad.

Hence Monsieur Lefebvre's first sentences left me doubtful of my schoolmate's insanity. I listened to the old man, but I criticised his statements.

The most serious symptom had supervened a day or two before the marriage. Louis had had some well-marked attacks of catalepsy. He had once remained motionless for fifty-nine hours, his eyes staring, neither speaking nor eating ; a purely nervous affection, to which persons under the influence of violent passion are liable ; a rare malady, but perfectly well known to the medical faculty. What was really extraordinary was that Louis should not have had several previous attacks, since his habits of rapt thought and the character of his mind would predispose him to them. But his temperament, physical and mental, was so admirably balanced, that it had no doubt been able to resist the demands on his strength. The excitement to which he had been wound up by the anticipation of acute physical enjoyment, enhanced by a chaste life and a highly-strung soul, had no doubt led to these attacks, of which the results are as little known as the cause.

The letters that have by chance escaped destruction show very plainly a transition from pure idealism to the most intense sensualism.

Time was when Lambert and I had admired this phenomenon of the human mind, in which he saw the fortuitous separation of our two natures, and the signs of a total removal of the inner man, using its unknown faculties under the operation of an unknown cause. This disorder, a mystery as deep as that of sleep, was connected with the scheme of evidence which Lambert had set forth in his *Treatise on the Will*. And when Monsieur Lefebvre spoke to me of Louis's first attack, I suddenly remembered a conversation we had had on the subject after reading a medical book.

'Deep meditation and rapt ecstasy are perhaps the undeveloped germs of catalepsy,' he had said in conclusion.

On the occasion when he so concisely formulated this idea, he had been trying to link mental phenomena together by a series of results, following the processes of the intellect step by step, from their beginnings as those simple, purely animal impulses of instinct, which are all-sufficient to many human beings, particularly to those men whose energies are wholly spent in mere mechanical labour; then, going on to the aggregation of ideas and rising to comparison, reflection, meditation, and finally ecstasy and catalepsy. Lambert, of course, in the artlessness of youth, imagined that he had laid down the lines of a great work when he thus built up a scale of the various degrees of man's mental powers.

I remember that, by one of those chances which seem like predestination, we got hold of a great Martyrology, in which the most curious narratives are given of the total abeyance of physical life which a man can attain to under the paroxysms of the inner life. By reflecting on the effects of fanaticism, Lambert was led to believe that the collected ideas to which we give the name of feelings may very possibly be the material outcome of some fluid which is generated in all men, more or less abundantly, according to the way in which their organs absorb, from the medium in which they live, the elementary atoms that produce it. We went crazy over catalepsy; and with the eagerness that boys throw into every pursuit, we endeavoured to endure pain by thinking of something else. We exhausted ourselves by making experiments not unlike those of the epileptic fanatics of the last century, a religious mania which will some day be of service to the science of humanity. I would stand on Lambert's chest, remaining there several minutes without giving him the slightest pain; but notwithstanding these crazy attempts, we did not achieve an attack of catalepsy.

This digression seemed necessary to account for my first doubts, which were, however, completely dispelled by Monsieur Lefebvre.

'When this attack had passed off,' said he, 'my nephew sank into a state of extreme terror, a dejection that nothing could overcome. He thought himself unfit for marriage. I watched him with the care of a mother for her child, and found him preparing to perform on himself the operation to which Origen believed he owed his talents. I at once carried him off to Paris, and placed him under the care of Monsieur Esquirol. All through our journey Louis sat sunk in almost unbroken torpor, and did not recognise me. The Paris physicians pronounced him incurable, and unanimously advised his being left in perfect solitude, with nothing to break the silence that was needful for his very improbable recovery, and that he should live always in a cool room with a subdued light.—Mademoiselle de Villenoix, whom I had been careful not to apprise of Louis's state,' he went on, blinking his eyes, 'but who was supposed to have broken off the match, went to Paris and heard what the doctors had pronounced. She immediately begged to see my nephew, who hardly recognised her; then, like the noble soul she is, she insisted on devoting herself to giving him such care as might tend to his recovery. She would have been obliged to do so if he had been her husband, she said, and could she do less for him as her lover?

She removed Louis to Villenoix, where they have been living for two years.'

So, instead of continuing my journey, I stopped at Blois to go to see Louis. Good Monsieur Lefebvre would not hear of my lodging anywhere but at his house, where he showed me his nephew's room with the books and all else that had belonged to him. At every turn the old man could not suppress some mournful exclamation, showing what hopes Louis's precocious genius had

raised, and the terrible grief into which this irreparable ruin had plunged him.

'That young fellow knew everything, my dear sir!' said he, laying on the table a volume containing Spinoza's works. 'How could so well organised a brain go astray?'

'Indeed, Monsieur,' said I, 'was it not perhaps the result of its being so highly organised? If he really is a victim to the malady as yet unstudied in all its aspects, which is known simply as madness, I am inclined to attribute it to his passion. His studies and his mode of life had strung his powers and faculties to a degree of energy beyond which the least further strain was too much for nature; Love was enough to crack them, or to raise them to a new form of expression which we are maligning perhaps, by ticketing it without due knowledge. In fact, he may perhaps have regarded the joys of marriage as an obstacle to the perfection of his inner man and his flight towards spiritual spheres.'

'My dear sir,' said the old man, after listening to me with attention, 'your reasoning is, no doubt, very sound; but even if I could follow it, would this melancholy logic comfort me for the loss of my nephew?'

Lambert's uncle was one of those men who live only by their affections.

I went to Villenoix on the following day. The kind old man accompanied me to the gates of Blois. When we were out on the road to Villenoix, he stopped me and said—

'As you may suppose, I do not go there. But do not forget what I have said; and in Mademoiselle de Villenoix's presence affect not to perceive that Louis is mad.'

He remained standing on the spot where I left him, watching me till I was out of sight.

I made my way to the chateau of Villenoix, not without deep agitation. My thoughts were many at each step on this road, which Louis had so often trodden

with a heart full of hopes, a soul spurred on by the myriad darts of love. The shrubs, the trees, the turns of the winding road where little gullies broke the banks on each side, were to me full of strange interest. I tried to enter into the impressions and thoughts of my unhappy friend. Those evening meetings on the edge of the coombe, where his lady-love had been wont to find him, had, no doubt, initiated Mademoiselle de Villenoix into the secrets of that vast and lofty spirit, as I had learned them all some years before.

But the thing that most occupied my mind, and gave to my pilgrimage the interest of intense curiosity, in addition to the almost pious feelings that led me onwards, was that glorious faith of Mademoiselle de Villenoix's which the good priest had told me of. Had she in the course of time been infected with her lover's madness, or had she so completely entered into his soul that she could understand all its thoughts, even the most perplexed? I lost myself in the wonderful problem of feeling, passing the highest inspirations of passion and the most beautiful instances of self-sacrifice. That one should die for the other is an almost vulgar form of devotion. To live faithful to one love is a form of heroism that immortalised Mademoiselle Dupuis. When the great Napoleon and Lord Byron could find successors in the hearts of women they had loved, we may well admire Bolingbroke's widow; but Mademoiselle Dupuis could feed on the memories of many years of happiness, whereas Mademoiselle de Villenoix, having known nothing of love but its first excitement, seemed to me to typify love in its highest expression. If she were herself almost crazy, it was splendid; but if she had understood and entered into his madness, she combined with the beauty of a noble heart a crowning effort of passion worthy to be studied and honoured.

When I saw the tall turrets of the château, remembering how often poor Lambert must have thrilled at the

sight of them, my heart beat anxiously. As I recalled the events of our boyhood, I was almost a sharer in his present life and situation. At last I reached a wide, deserted courtyard, and I went into the hall of the house without meeting a soul. There the sound of my steps brought out an old woman, to whom I gave a letter written to Mademoiselle de Villenoix by Monsieur Lefebvre. In a few minutes this woman returned to bid me enter, and led me to a low room, floored with black-and-white marble; the Venetian shutters were closed, and at the end of the room I dimly saw Louis Lambert.

'Be seated, Monsieur,' said a gentle voice that went to my heart.

Mademoiselle de Villenoix was at my side before I was aware of her presence, and noiselessly brought me a chair, which at first I would not accept. It was so dark that at first I saw Mademoiselle de Villenoix and Lambert only as two black masses perceived against the gloomy background. I presently sat down under the influence of the feeling that comes over us, almost in spite of ourselves, under the obscure vault of a church. My eyes, full of the bright sunshine, accustomed themselves gradually to this artificial night.

'Monsieur is your old school-friend,' she said to Louis.

He made no reply. At last I could see him, and it was one of those spectacles that are stamped on the memory for ever. He was standing, his elbows resting on the cornice of the low wainscot, which threw his body forward, so that it seemed bowed under the weight of his bent head. His hair was as long as a woman's, falling over his shoulders and hanging about his face, giving him a resemblance to the busts of the great men of the time of Louis XIV. His face was perfectly white. He constantly rubbed one leg against the other, with a mechanical action that nothing could have checked, and the incessant friction of the bones made a doleful sound. Near him was a bed of moss on boards.

'He very rarely lies down,' said Mademoiselle de Villenoix; 'but whenever he does, he sleeps for several days.'

Louis stood, as I beheld him, day and night with a fixed gaze, never winking his eyelids as we do. Having asked Mademoiselle de Villenoix whether a little more light would hurt our friend, on her reply I opened the shutters a little way, and could see the expression of Lambert's countenance. Alas! he was wrinkled, white-headed, his eyes dull and lifeless as those of the blind. His features seemed all drawn upwards to the top of his head. I made several attempts to talk to him, but he did not hear me. He was a wreck snatched from the grave, a conquest of life from death—or of death from life!

I stayed for about an hour, sunk in unaccountable dreams, and lost in painful thought. I listened to Mademoiselle de Villenoix, who told me every detail of this life—that of a child in arms.

Suddenly Louis ceased rubbing his legs together, and said slowly—

'The angels are white.'

I cannot express the effect produced upon me by this utterance, by the sound of the voice I had loved, whose accents, so painfully expected, had seemed to be lost for ever. My eyes filled with tears in spite of every effort. An involuntary instinct warned me, making me doubt whether Louis had really lost his reason. I was indeed well assured that he neither saw nor heard me; but the sweetness of his tone, which seemed to reveal heavenly happiness, gave his speech an amazing effect. These words, the incomplete revelation of an unknown world, rang in our souls like some glorious distant bells in the depth of a dark night. I was no longer surprised that Mademoiselle de Villenoix considered Lambert to be perfectly sane. The life of the soul had perhaps subdued that of the body. His faithful companion had no doubt

—as I had at that moment—intuitions of that melodious and beautiful existence to which we give the name of Heaven in its highest meaning.

This woman, this angel, always was with him, seated at her embroidery frame; and each time she drew the needle out she gazed at Lambert with sad and tender feeling. Unable to endure this terrible sight—for I could not, like Mademoiselle de Villenoix, read all his secrets—I went out, and she came with me to walk for a few minutes and talk of herself and of Lambert.

'Louis must, no doubt, appear to be mad,' said she. 'But he is not, if the term mad ought only to be used in speaking of those whose brain is for some unknown cause diseased, and who can show no reason in their actions. Everything in my husband is perfectly balanced. Though he did not actively recognise you, it is not that he did not see you. He has succeeded in detaching himself from his body, and discerns us under some other aspect—what that is, I know not. When he speaks, he utters wondrous things. Only it often happens that he concludes in speech an idea that had its beginning in his mind; or he may begin a sentence and finish it in thought. To other men he seems insane; to me, living as I do in his mind, his ideas are quite lucid. I follow the road his spirit travels; and though I do not know every turning, I can reach the goal with him.

'Which of us has not often known what it is to think of some futile thing and be led on to some serious reflection through the ideas or memories it brings in its train? Not unfrequently, after speaking about some trifle, the simple starting-point of a rapid train of reflections, a thinker may forget or be silent as to the abstract connection of ideas leading to his conclusion, and speak again only to utter the last link in the chain of his meditations.

'Inferior minds, to whom this swift mental vision is a thing unknown, who are ignorant of the spirit's inner

workings, laugh at the dreamer; and if he is subject to this kind of obliviousness, regard him as a madman. Louis is always in this state; he soars perpetually through the spaces of thought, traversing them with the swiftness of a swallow; I can follow him in his flight. This is the whole history of his madness. Some day, perhaps, Louis will come back to the life in which we vegetate; but if he breathes the air of heaven before the time when we may be permitted to do so, why should we desire to have him down among us? I am content to hear his heart beat, and all my happiness is to be with him. Is he not wholly mine? In three years, twice at intervals he was himself for a few days; once in Switzerland, where we went, and once in an island off the wilds of Brittany, where he took some sea-baths. I have twice been very happy! I can live on memory.'

'But do you write down the things he says?' I asked.

'Why should I?' said she.

I was silent; human knowledge was indeed as nothing in this woman's eyes.

'At those times, when he talked a little,' she added, 'I think I have recorded some of his phrases, but I left it off; I did not understand him then.'

I asked her for them by a look; she understood me. This is what I have been able to preserve from oblivion.

I

Everything here on earth is produced by an ethereal substance which is the common element of various phenomena, known inaccurately as electricity, heat, light, the galvanic fluid, the magnetic fluid, and so forth. The universal distribution of this substance, under various forms, constitutes what is commonly known as Matter.

II

The brain is the alembic to which the Animal con-

veys what each of its organisations, in proportion to the strength of that vessel, can absorb of that Substance, which returns it transformed into Will.

The Will is a fluid inherent in every creature endowed with motion. Hence the innumerable forms assumed by the Animal, the results of its combinations with that Substance. The Animal's instincts are the product of the coercion of the environment in which it develops. Hence its variety.

III

In Man the Will becomes a power peculiar to him, and exceeding in intensity that of any other species.

IV

By constant assimilation, the Will depends on the Substance it meets with again and again in all its transmutations, pervading them by Thought, which is a product peculiar to the human Will, in combination with the modifications of that Substance.

V

The innumerable forms assumed by Thought are the result of the greater or less perfection of the human mechanism.

VI

The Will acts through organs commonly called the five senses, which, in fact, are but one—the faculty of Sight. Feeling and tasting, hearing and smelling, are Sight modified to the transformations of the Substance which Man can absorb in two conditions: untransformed and transformed.

VII

Everything of which the form comes within the

cognisance of the one sense of Sight may be reduced to certain simple bodies of which the elements exist in the air, the light, or in the elements of air and light. Sound is a condition of the air; colours are all conditions of light; every smell is a combination of air and light; hence the four aspects of Matter with regard to Man—sound, colour, smell, and shape—have the same origin, for the day is not far off when the relationship of the phenomena of air and light will be made clear.

Thought, which is allied to Light, is expressed in words which depend on sound. To man, then, everything is derived from the Substance, whose transformations vary only through Number—a certain quantitative dissimilarity, the proportions resulting in the individuals or objects of what are classed as Kingdoms.

VIII

When the Substance is absorbed in sufficient number (or quantity) it makes of man an immensely powerful mechanism, in direct communication with the very element of the Substance, and acting on organic nature in the same way as a large stream when it absorbs the smaller brooks. Volition sets this force in motion independently of the Mind. By its concentration it acquires some of the qualities of the Substance, such as the swiftness of light, the penetrating power of electricity, and the faculty of saturating a body; to which must be added that it apprehends what it can do.

Still, there is in man a primordial and overruling phenomenon which defies analysis. Man may be dissected completely; the elements of Will and Mind may perhaps be found; but there still will remain beyond apprehension the *x* against which I once used to struggle. That *x* is the Word, the Logos, whose communication burns and consumes those who are not prepared to receive it. The Word is for ever generating the Substance.

IX

Rage, like all our vehement demonstrations, is a current of the human force that acts electrically; its turmoil when liberated acts on persons who are present even though they be neither its cause nor its object. Are there not certain men who by a discharge of Volition can sublimate the essence of the feelings of the masses?

X

Fanaticism and all emotions are living forces. These forces in some beings become rivers that gather in and sweep away everything.

XI

Though Space *is*, certain faculties have the power of traversing it with such rapidity that it is as though it existed not. From your own bed to the frontiers of the universe there are but two steps: Will and Faith.

XII

Facts are nothing; they do not subsist; all that lives of us is the Idea.

XIII

The realm of Ideas is divided into three spheres: that of Instinct, that of Abstractions, that of Specialism.

XIV

The greater part, the weaker part of visible humanity, dwells in the Sphere of Instinct. The *Instinctives* are born, labour, and die without rising to the second degree of human intelligence, namely, Abstraction.

XV

Society begins in the sphere of Abstraction. If Abstraction, as compared with Instinct, is an almost divine power, it is nevertheless incredibly weak as compared with the gift of Specialism, which is the formula of God. Abstraction comprises all nature in a germ, more virtually than a seed contains the whole system of a plant and its fruits. From Abstraction are derived laws, arts, social ideas, and interests. It is the glory and the scourge of the earth: its glory because it has created social life; its scourge because it allows man to evade entering into Specialism, which is one of the paths to the Infinite. Man measures everything by Abstractions: Good and Evil, Virtue and Crime. Its formula of equity is a pair of scales, its justice is blind. God's justice sees: there is all the difference.

There must be intermediate Beings, then, dividing the sphere of Instinct from the sphere of Abstractions, in whom the two elements mingle in an infinite variety of proportions. Some have more of one, some more of the other. And there are also some in which the two powers neutralise each other by equality of effect.

XVI

Specialism consists in seeing the things of the material universe and the things of the spiritual universe in all their ramifications original and causative. The greatest human geniuses are those who started from the darkness of Abstraction to attain to the light of Specialism. (Specialism, *species*, sight; speculation, or seeing everything, and all at once; *Speculum*, a mirror or means of apprehending a thing by seeing the whole of it.) Jesus had the gift of Specialism; He saw each fact in its root and in its results, in the past where it had its rise, and in the future where it would grow and spread; His sight

pierced into the understanding of others. The perfection of the inner eye gives rise to the gift of Specialism. Specialism brings with it Intuition. Intuition is one of the faculties of the Inner Man, of which Specialism is an attribute. Intuition acts by an imperceptible sensation of which he who obeys it is not conscious: for instance, Napoleon instinctively moving from a spot struck immediately afterwards by a cannon ball.

XVII

Between the sphere of Abstraction and that of Specialism, as between those of Abstraction and Instinct, there are beings in whom the attributes of both combine and produce a mixture; these are men of genius.

XVIII

Specialism is necessarily the most perfect expression of man, and he is the link binding the visible world to the higher worlds; he acts, sees, and feels by his inner powers. The man of Abstraction thinks. The man of Instinct acts.

XIX

Hence man has three degrees. That of Instinct, below the average; that of Abstraction, the general average; that of Specialism, above the average. Specialism opens to man his true career; the Infinite dawns on him; he sees what his destiny must be.

XX

There are three worlds—the Natural, the Spiritual, and the Divine. Humanity passes through the Natural world, which is not fixed either in its essence or its faculties. The Spiritual world is fixed in its essence and

unfixed in its faculties. The Divine world is fixed in its faculties and its essence both. Hence there is necessarily a Material worship, a Spiritual worship, and a Divine worship: three forms expressed in action, speech, and prayer, or, in other words, in deed, apprehension, and love. Instinct demands deed; Abstraction is concerned with Ideas; Specialism sees the end, it aspires to God with presentiment or contemplation.

XXI

Hence, perhaps, some day the converse of *Et Verbum caro factum est* will become the epitome of a new Gospel, which will proclaim that The Flesh shall be made the Word and become the Utterance of God.

XXII

The Resurrection is the work of the Wind of Heaven sweeping over the worlds. The angel borne on the Wind does not say: 'Arise, ye dead'; he says, 'Arise, ye who live!'

Such are the meditations which I have with great difficulty cast in a form adapted to our understanding. There are some others which Pauline remembered more exactly, wherefore I know not, and which I wrote from her dictation; but they drive the mind to despair when, knowing in what an intellect they originated, we strive to understand them. I will quote a few of them to complete my study of this figure; partly, too, perhaps, because, in these last aphorisms, Lambert's formulas seem to include a larger universe than the former set, which would apply only to zoological evolution. Still, there is a relation between the two fragments, evident to those persons—though they be but few—who love to dive into such intellectual deeps.

I

Everything on earth exists solely by motion and number.

II

Motion is, so to speak, number in action.

III

Motion is the product of a force generated by the Word and by Resistance, which is Matter. But for Resistance, Motion would have had no results; its action would have been infinite. Newton's gravitation is not a law, but an effect of the general law of universal motion.

IV

Motion, acting in proportion to Resistance, produces a result which is Life. As soon as one or the other is the stronger, Life ceases.

V

No portion of Motion is wasted; it always produces number; still, it can be neutralised by disproportionate resistance, as in minerals.

VI

Number, which produces variety of all kinds, also gives rise to Harmony, which, in the highest meaning of the word, is the relation of parts to the whole.

VII

But for Motion, everything would be one and the

same. Its products, identical in their essence, differ only by Number, which gives rise to faculties.

VIII

Man looks to faculties; angels look to the Essence.

IX

By giving his body up to elemental action, man can achieve an inner union with the Light.

X

Number is intellectual evidence belonging to man alone; by it he acquires knowledge of the Word.

XI

There is a Number beyond which the impure cannot pass: the Number which is the limit of creation.

XII

The Unit was the starting-point of every product: compounds are derived from it, but the end must be identical with the beginning. Hence this Spiritual formula: the compound Unit, the variable Unit, the fixed Unit.

XIII

The Universe is the Unit in variety. Motion is the means; Number is the result. The end is the return of all things to the Unit, which is God.

XIV

Three and Seven are the two chief Spiritual numbers.

XV

Three is the formula of created worlds. It is the Spiritual Sign of the creation, as it is the Material Sign of dimension. In fact, God has worked by curved lines only: the Straight Line is an attribute of the Infinite; and man, who has the presentiment of the Infinite, reproduces it in his works. Two is the number of generation. Three is the number of Life which includes generation and offspring. Add the sum of four, and you have Seven, the formula of Heaven. Above all is God; He is the Unit.

After going in to see Louis once more, I took leave of his wife and went home, lost in ideas so adverse to social life that, in spite of a promise to return to Villenoix, I did not go.

The sight of Louis had had some mysteriously sinister influence over me. I was afraid to place myself again in that heavy atmosphere, where ecstasy was contagious. Any man would have felt, as I did, a longing to throw himself into the infinite, just as one soldier after another killed himself in a certain sentry box where one had committed suicide in the camp at Boulogne. It is a known fact that Napoleon was obliged to have the hut burnt which had harboured an idea that had become a mortal infection.

Louis's room had perhaps the same fatal effect as that sentry box.

These two facts would then be additional evidence in favour of his theory of the transfusion of Will. I was conscious of strange disturbances, transcending the most fantastic results of taking tea, coffee, or opium, of dreams or of fever—mysterious agents, whose terrible action often sets our brains on fire.

I ought perhaps to have made a separate book of these fragments of thought, intelligible only to certain spirits

who have been accustomed to lean over the edge of abysses in the hope of seeing to the bottom. The life of that mighty brain, which split up on every side perhaps, like a too vast empire, would have been set forth in the narrative of this man's visions—a being incomplete for lack of force or of weakness; but I preferred to give an account of my own impressions rather than to compose a more or less poetical romance.

Louis Lambert died at the age of twenty-eight, September 25, 1824, in his true love's arms. He was buried by her desire in an island in the park at Villenoix. His tombstone is a plain stone cross, without name or date. Like a flower that has blossomed on the margin of a precipice, and drops into it, its colours and fragrance all unknown, it was fitting that he too should fall. Like many another misprized soul, he had often yearned to dive haughtily into the void, and abandon there the secrets of his own life.

Mademoiselle de Villenoix would, however, have been quite justified in recording his name on that cross with her own. Since her partner's death, reunion has been her constant, hourly hope. But the vanities of woe are foreign to faithful souls.

Villenoix is falling into ruin. She no longer resides there; to the end, no doubt, that she may the better picture herself there as she used to be. She had said long ago—

'His heart was mine; his genius is with God.'

Château de Saché, *June-July* 1832.

THE EXILES

ALMAE SORORI

In the year 1308 few houses were yet standing on the Island formed by the alluvium and sand deposited by the Seine above the Cité, behind the Church of Notre-Dame. The first man who was so bold as to build on this strand, then liable to frequent floods, was a constable of the watch of the City of Paris, who had been able to do some service to their Reverences the Chapter of the Cathedral; and in return the Bishop leased to him twenty-five perches of land, with exemption from all feudal dues or taxes on the buildings he might erect.

Seven years before the beginning of this narrative, Joseph Tirechair, one of the sternest of Paris constables, as his name [Tear Flesh] would indicate, had, thanks to his share of the fines collected by him for delinquencies committed within the precincts of the Cité, been able to build a house on the bank of the Seine just at the end of the Rue du Port-Saint-Landry. To protect the merchandise landed on the strand, the municipality had constructed a sort of breakwater of masonry, which may still be seen on some old plans of Paris, and which preserved the piles of the landing-place by meeting the rush of water and ice at the upper end of the Island. The constable had taken advantage of this for the foundation of his house, so that there were several steps up to his door.

Like all the houses of that date, this cottage was

crowned by a peaked roof, forming a gable-end to the front, of half a diamond. To the great regret of historians, but two or three examples of such roofs survive in Paris. A round opening gave light to a loft, where the constable's wife dried the linen of the Chapter, for she had the honour of washing for the Cathedral—which was certainly not a bad customer. On the first floor were two rooms, let to lodgers at a rent, one year with another, of forty sous *Parisis* each, an exorbitant sum, that was however justified by the luxury Tirechair had lavished on their adornment. Flanders tapestry hung on the walls, and a large bed with a top valance of green serge, like a peasant's bed, was amply furnished with mattresses, and covered with good sheets of fine linen. Each room had a stove called a *chauffe-doux* ; the floor, carefully polished by Dame Tirechair's apprentices, shone like the woodwork of a shrine. Instead of stools, the lodgers had deep chairs of carved walnut, the spoils probably of some raided castle. Two chests with pewter mouldings, and tables on twisted legs, completed the fittings, worthy of the most fastidious knights-banneret whom business might bring to Paris.

The windows of those two rooms looked out on the river. From one you could only see the shores of the Seine, and the three barren islands, of which two were subsequently joined together to form the Ile Saint-Louis ; the third was the Ile de Louviers. From the other could be seen, down a vista of the Port-Saint-Landry, the buildings on the Grève, the Bridge of Notre-Dame, with its houses, and the tall towers of the Louvre, but lately built by Philippe-Auguste to overlook the then poor and squalid town of Paris, which suggests so many imaginary marvels to the fancy of modern romancers.

The ground floor of Tirechair's house consisted of a large hall, where his wife's business was carried on, through which the lodgers were obliged to pass on their way to their own rooms up a stairway like a mill-

ladder. Behind this were a kitchen and a bedroom, with a view over the Seine. A tiny garden, reclaimed from the waters, displayed at the foot of this modest dwelling its beds of cabbages and onions, and a few rose-bushes, sheltered by palings, forming a sort of hedge. A little structure of lath and mud served as a kennel for a big dog, the indispensable guardian of so lonely a dwelling. Beyond this kennel was a little plot, where the hens cackled whose eggs were sold to the Canons. Here and there on this patch of earth, muddy or dry according to the whimsical Parisian weather, a few trees grew, constantly lashed by the wind, and teased and broken by the passer-by—willows, reeds, and tall grasses.

The Eyot, the Seine, the landing-place, the house, were all overshadowed on the west by the huge basilica of Notre-Dame casting its cold gloom over the whole plot as the sun moved. Then, as now, there was not in all Paris a more deserted spot, a more solemn or more melancholy prospect. The noise of waters, the chanting of priests, or the piping of the wind, were the only sounds that disturbed this wilderness, where lovers would sometimes meet to discuss their secrets when the church-folks and clergy were safe in church at the services.

One evening in April in the year 1308, Tirechair came home in a remarkably bad temper. For three days past everything had been in good order on the King's highway. Now, as an officer of the peace, nothing annoyed him so much as to feel himself useless. He flung down his halbert in a rage, muttered inarticulate words as he pulled off his doublet, half red and half blue, and slipped on a shabby camlet jerkin. After helping himself from the bread-box to a hunch of bread, and spreading it with butter, he seated himself on a bench, looked round at his four white-washed walls, counted the beams of the ceiling, made a mental inventory of the household goods hanging from the nails, scowled at the neatness which

left him nothing to complain of, and looked at his wife, who said not a word as she ironed the albs and surplices from the sacristy.

'By my halidom,' he said, to open the conversation, 'I cannot think, Jacqueline, where you go to catch your apprenticed maids. Now, here is one,' he went on, pointing to a girl who was folding an altar-cloth, clumsily enough, it must be owned, 'who looks to me more like a damsel rather free of her person than a sturdy, country wench. Her hands are as white as a fine lady's! By the Mass! and her hair smells of essences, I verily believe, and her hose are as fine as a queen's. By the two horns of Old Nick, matters please me but ill as I find them here.'

The girl coloured, and stole a look at Jacqueline, full of alarm not unmixed with pride. The mistress answered her glance with a smile, laid down her work, and turned to her husband.

'Come now,' said she, in a sharp tone, 'you need not harry me. Are you going to accuse me next of some underhand tricks? Patrol your roads as much as you please, but do not meddle here with anything but what concerns your sleeping in peace, drinking your wine, and eating what I set before you, or else, I warn you, I will have no more to do with keeping you healthy and happy. Let any one find me a happier man in all the town,' she went on, with a scolding grimace. 'He has silver in his purse, a gable over the Seine, a stout halbert on one hand, an honest wife on the other, a house as clean and smart as a new pin! And he growls like a pilgrim smarting from Saint Anthony's fire!'

'Hey day!' exclaimed the sergeant of the watch, 'do you fancy, Jacqueline, that I have any wish to see my house razed down, my halbert given to another, and my wife standing in the pillory?'

Jacqueline and the dainty journeywoman turned pale.

'Just tell me what you are driving at,' said the washer-

woman sharply, 'and make a clean breast of it. For some days, my man, I have observed that you have some maggot twisting in your poor brain. Come up, then, and have it all out. You must be a pretty coward indeed if you fear any harm when you have only to guard the common council and live under the protection of the Chapter! Their Reverences the Canons would lay the whole bishopric under an interdict if Jacqueline brought a complaint of the smallest damage.'

As she spoke, she went straight up to her husband and took him by the arm.

'Come with me,' she added, pulling him up and out on to the steps.

When they were down by the water in their little garden, Jacqueline looked saucily in her husband's face.

'I would have you to know, you old gaby, that when my lady fair goes out, a piece of gold comes into our savings-box.'

'Oh, ho!' said the constable, who stood silent and meditative before his wife. But he presently said, 'Any way, we are done for.—What brings the dame to our house?'

'She comes to see the well-favoured young clerk who lives overhead,' replied Jacqueline, looking up at the window that opened on to the vast landscape of the Seine valley.

'The Devil's in it!' cried the man. 'For a few base crowns you have ruined me, Jacqueline. Is that an honest trade for a sergeant's decent wife to ply? And, be she Countess or Baroness, the lady will not be able to get us out of the trap in which we shall find ourselves caught sooner or later. Shall we not have to square accounts with some puissant and offended husband? for, by the Mass, she is fair to look upon!'

'But she is a widow, I tell you, grey gander! How dare you accuse your wife of foul play and folly? And the lady has never spoken a word to yon gentle clerk;

she is content to look on him and think of him. Poor lad! he would be dead of starvation by now but for her, for she is as good as a mother to him. And he, the sweet cherub! it is as easy to cheat him as to rock a new-born babe. He believes his pence will last for ever, and he has eaten them through twice over in the past six months.'

'Woman,' said the sergeant, solemnly pointing to the Place de Grève, 'do you remember seeing, even from this spot, the fire in which they burnt the Danish woman the other day?'

'What then?' said Jacqueline, in a fright.

'What then?' echoed Tirechair. 'Why, the two men who lodge with us smell of scorching. Neither Chapter nor Countess nor Protector can serve them. Here is Easter come round; the year is ending; we must turn our company out of doors, and that at once. Do you think you can teach an old constable how to know a gallows-bird? Our two lodgers were on terms with la Porette, that heretic jade from Denmark or Norway, whose last cries you heard from here. She was a brave witch; she never blenched at the stake, which was proof enough of her compact with the Devil. I saw her as plain as I see you; she preached to the throng, and declared she was in heaven and could see God.

'And since that, I tell you, I have never slept quietly in my bed. My lord, who lodges over us, is of a surety more of a wizard than a Christian. On my word as an officer, I shiver when that old man passes near me; he never sleeps of nights; if I wake, his voice is ringing like a bourdon of bells, and I hear him uttering incantations in the language of hell. Have you ever seen him eat an honest crust of bread or a hearth-cake made by a good Catholic baker? His brown skin has been scorched and tanned by hell-fires. Marry, and I tell you his eyes hold a spell like those of serpents. Jacqueline, I will have none of those two men under my roof. I see too much

of the law not to know that it is well to have nothing to do with it.—You must get rid of our two lodgers; the elder, because I suspect him; the youngster, because he is too pretty. They neither of them seem to me to keep Christian company. The boy is ever staring at the moon, the stars, and the clouds, like a wizard watching for the hour when he shall mount his broomstick; the other old rogue certainly makes some use of the poor boy for his black art. My house stands too close to the river as it is, and that risk of ruin is bad enough without bringing down fire from heaven, or the love affairs of a countess. I have spoken. Do not rebel.'

In spite of her sway in the house, Jacqueline stood stupefied as she listened to the edict fulminated against his lodgers by the sergeant of the watch. She mechanically looked up at the window of the room inhabited by the old man, and shivered with horror as she suddenly caught sight of the gloomy, melancholy face, and the piercing eye that so affected her husband, accustomed as he was to dealing with criminals.

At that period, great and small, priests and laymen, all trembled before the idea of any supernatural power. The word 'magic' was as powerful as leprosy to root up feelings, break social ties, and freeze piety in the most generous soul. It suddenly struck the constable's wife that she never, in fact, had seen either of her lodgers exercising any human function. Though the younger man's voice was as sweet and melodious as the tones of a flute, she so rarely heard it that she was tempted to think his silence the result of a spell. As she recalled the strange beauty of that pink-and-white face, and saw in memory the fine fair hair and moist brilliancy of those eyes, she believed they were indeed the artifices of the Devil. She remembered that for days at a time she had never heard the slightest sound from either room. Where were the strangers during all those hours?

Suddenly the most singular circumstances recurred to

her mind. She was completely overmastered by fear, and could even discern witchcraft in the rich lady's interest in this young Godefroid, a poor orphan who had come from Flanders to study at the University of Paris. She hastily put her hand into one of her pockets, pulled out four livres of Tournay in large silver coinage, and looked at the pieces with an expression of avarice mingled with terror.

'That, at any rate, is not false coin,' said she, showing the silver to her husband. 'Besides,' she went on, 'how can I turn them out after taking next year's rent paid in advance?'

'You had better inquire of the Dean of the Chapter,' replied Tirechair. 'Is not it his business to tell us how we should deal with these extraordinary persons?'

'Ay, truly extraordinary,' cried Jacqueline. 'To think of their cunning; coming here under the very shadow of Notre-Dame! Still,' she went on, 'or ever I ask the Dean, why not warn that fair and noble lady of the risk she runs?'

As she spoke, Jacqueline went into the house with her husband, who had not missed a mouthful. Tirechair, as a man grown old in the tricks of his trade, affected to believe that the strange lady was in fact a work-girl; still, this assumed indifference could not altogether cloak the timidity of a courtier who respects a royal incognito. At this moment six was striking by the clock of Saint-Denis du Pas, a small church that stood between Notre-Dame and the Port-Saint-Landry—the first church erected in Paris, on the very spot where Saint Denis was laid on the gridiron, as chronicles tell. The hour flew from steeple to tower all over the city. Then suddenly confused shouts were heard on the left bank of the Seine, behind Notre-Dame, in the quarter where the schools of the University harboured their swarms.

At this signal, Jacqueline's elder lodger began to move about his room. The sergeant, his wife, and the strange

lady listened while he opened and shut his door, and the old man's heavy step was heard on the steep stair. The constable's suspicions gave such interest to the advent of this personage, that the lady was startled as she observed the strange expression of the two countenances before her. Referring the terrors of this couple to the youth she was protecting—as was natural in a lover—the young lady awaited, with some uneasiness, the event thus heralded by the fears of her so-called master and mistress.

The old man paused for a moment on the threshold to scrutinise the three persons in the room, and seemed to be looking for his young companion. This glance of inquiry, unsuspicious as it was, agitated the three. Indeed, nobody, not even the stoutest man, could deny that Nature had bestowed exceptional powers on this being, who seemed almost supernatural. Though his eyes were somewhat deeply shaded by the wide sockets fringed with long eyebrows, they were set, like a kite's eyes, in eyelids so broad, and bordered by so dark a circle sharply defined on his cheek, that they seemed rather to be prominent. These singular eyes had in them something indescribably domineering and piercing, which took possession of the soul by a grave and thoughtful look, a look as bright and lucid as that of a serpent or a bird, but which held one fascinated and crushed by the swift communication of some tremendous sorrow, or of some superhuman power.

Every feature was in harmony with this eye of lead and of fire, at once rigid and flashing, stern and calm. While in this eagle eye earthly emotions seemed in some sort extinct, the lean, parched face also bore traces of unhappy passions and great deeds done. The nose, which was narrow and aquiline, was so long that it seemed to hang on by the nostrils. The bones of the face were strongly marked by the long, straight wrinkles that furrowed the hollow cheeks. Every line in the countenance looked dark. It would suggest the bed of

a torrent where the violence of former floods was recorded in the depth of the water-courses, which testified to some terrible, unceasing turmoil. Like the ripples left by the oars of a boat on the waters, deep lines, starting from each side of his nose, marked his face strongly, and gave an expression of bitter sadness to his mouth, which was firm and straight-lipped. Above the storm thus stamped on his countenance, his calm brow rose with what may be called boldness, and crowned it as with a marble dome.

The stranger preserved that intrepid and dignified manner that is frequently habitual with men inured to disaster, and fitted by nature to stand unmoved before a furious mob and to face the greatest dangers. He seemed to move in a sphere apart, where he poised above humanity. His gestures, no less than his look, were full of irresistible power; his lean hands were those of a soldier; and if your own eyes were forced to fall before his piercing gaze, you were no less sure to tremble when by word or action he spoke to your soul. He moved in silent majesty that made him seem a king without his guard, a god without his rays.

His dress emphasised the ideas suggested by the peculiarities of his mien and face. Soul, body, and garb were in harmony, and calculated to impress the coldest imagination. He wore a sort of sleeveless gown of black cloth, fastened in front, and falling to the calf, leaving the neck bare with no collar. His doublet and boots were likewise black. On his head was a black velvet cap like a priest's, sitting in a close circle above his forehead, and not showing a single hair. It was the strictest mourning, the gloomiest habit a man could wear. But for a long sword that hung by his side from a leather belt which could be seen where his surcoat hung open, a priest would have hailed him as a brother. Though of no more than middle height, he appeared tall; and, looking him in the face, he seemed a giant.

'The clock has struck, the boat is waiting; will you not come?'

At these words, spoken in bad French, but distinctly audible in the silence, a little noise was heard in the other top room, and the young man came down as lightly as a bird.

When Godefroid appeared, the lady's face turned crimson; she trembled, started, and covered her face with her white hands.

Any woman might have shared her agitation at the sight of this youth of about twenty, of a form and stature so slender that at a first glance he might have been taken for a mere boy, or a young girl in disguise. His black cap—like the *beret* worn by the Basque people—showed a brow as white as snow, where grace and innocence shone with an expression of divine sweetness—the light of a soul full of faith. A poet's fancy would have seen there the star which, in some old tale, a mother entreats the fairy godmother to set on the forehead of an infant abandoned, like Moses, to the waves. Love lurked in the thousand fair curls that fell over his shoulders. His throat, truly a swan's throat, was white and exquisitely round. His blue eyes, bright and liquid, mirrored the sky. His features and the mould of his brow were refined and delicate enough to enchant a painter. The bloom of beauty, which in a woman's face causes men such indescribable delight, the exquisite purity of outline, the halo of light that bathes the features we love, were here combined with a masculine complexion, and with strength as yet but half developed, in the most enchanting contrast. His was one of those melodious countenances which even when silent speak and attract us. And yet, on marking it attentively, the incipient blight might have been detected which comes of a great thought or a passion, the faint yellow tinge that made him seem like a young leaf opening to the sun.

No contrast could be greater or more startling than that seen in the companionship of these two men. It was like seeing a frail and graceful shrub that has grown from the hollow trunk of some gnarled willow, withered by age, blasted by lightning, standing decrepit ; one of those majestic trees that painters love ; the trembling sapling takes shelter there from storms. One was a god, the other was an angel ; one the poet that feels, the other the poet that expresses—a prophet in sorrow, a levite in prayer.

They went out together without speaking.

'Did you mark how he called him to him ?' cried the sergeant of the watch when the footsteps of the couple were no longer audible on the strand. 'Are not they a demon and his familiar ?'

'Phooh !' puffed Jacqueline. 'I felt smothered ! I never marked our two lodgers so carefully. 'Tis a bad thing for us women that the Devil can wear so fair a mien !'

'Ay, cast some holy water on him,' said Tirechair, 'and you will see him turn into a toad.—I am off to tell the office all about them.'

On hearing this speech, the lady roused herself from the reverie into which she had sunk, and looked at the constable, who was donning his red-and-blue jacket.

'Whither are you off to ?' she asked.

'To tell the justices that wizards are lodging in our house very much against our will.'

The lady smiled.

'I,' said she, 'am the Comtesse de Mahaut,' and she rose with a dignity that took the man's breath away. 'Beware of bringing the smallest trouble on your guests. Above all, respect the old man ; I have seen him in the company of your Lord the King, who entreated him courteously ; you will be ill advised to trouble him in any way. As to my having been here—never breathe a word of it, as you value your life.'

She said no more, but relapsed into thought.

Presently she looked up, signed to Jacqueline, and together they went up into Godefroid's room. The fair Countess looked at the bed, the carved chairs, the chest, the tapestry, the table, with a joy like that of the exile who sees on his return the crowded roofs of his native town nestling at the foot of a hill.

'If you have not deceived me,' said she to Jacqueline, 'I promise you a hundred crowns in gold.'

'Behold, Madam,' said the woman, 'the poor angel is confiding—here is all his treasure.'

As she spoke, Jacqueline opened a drawer in the table and showed some parchments.

'God of mercy!' cried the Countess, snatching up a document that caught her eye, on which she read, *Gothofredus Comes Gantiacus* (Godefroid, Count of Ghent).

She dropped the parchment, and passed her hand over her brow; then, feeling, no doubt, that she had compromised herself by showing so much emotion, she recovered her cold demeanour.

'I am satisfied,' said she.

She went downstairs and out of the house. The constable and his wife stood in their doorway, and saw her take the path to the landing-place.

A boat was moored hard by. When the rustle of the Countess's approach was audible, a boatman suddenly stood up, helped the fair laundress to take her seat in it, and rowed with such strength as to make the boat fly like a swallow down the stream.

'You are a sorry fellow,' said Jacqueline, giving the officer's shoulder a familiar slap. 'We have earned a hundred gold crowns this morning.'

'I like harbouring lords no better than harbouring wizards. And I know not, of the two, which is the more like to bring us to the gallows,' replied Tirechair, taking up his halbert. 'I will go my rounds over by

Champfleuri ; God protect us, and send me to meet some pert jade out in her bravery of gold rings to glitter in the shade like a glow-worm ! '

Jacqueline, alone in the house, hastily went up to the unknown lord's room to discover, if she could, some clue to this mysterious business. Like some learned men who give themselves infinite pains to complicate the clear and simple laws of nature, she had already invented a chaotic romance to account for the meeting of these three persons under her humble roof. She hunted through the chest, examined everything, but could find nothing extraordinary. She saw nothing on the table but a writing-case and some sheets of parchment ; and as she could not read, this discovery told her nothing. A woman's instinct then took her into the young man's room, and from thence she descried her two lodgers crossing the river in the ferry boat.

'They stand like two statues,' said she to herself. 'Ah, ha ! They are landing at the Rue du Fouarre. How nimble he is, the sweet youth ! He jumped out like a bird. By him the old man looks like some stone saint in the Cathedral.—They are going to the old School of the Four Nations. Presto ! they are out of sight.—And this is where he lives, poor cherub ! ' she went on, looking about the room. 'How smart and winning he is ! Ah ! your fine gentry are made of other stuff than we are.'

And Jacqueline went down again after smoothing down the bed-coverlet, dusting the chest, and wondering for the hundredth time in six months—

'What in the world does he do all the blessed day ? He cannot always be staring at the blue sky and the stars that God has hung up there like lanterns. That dear boy has known trouble. But why do he and the old man hardly ever speak to each other ? '

Then she lost herself in wonderment and in thoughts which, in her woman's brain, were tangled like a skein of thread.

The old man and his young companion had gone into one of the schools for which the Rue du Fouarre was at that time famous throughout Europe. At the moment when Jacqueline's two lodgers arrived at the old School des Quatre Nations, the celebrated Sigier, the most noted Doctor of Mystical Theology of the University of Paris, was mounting his pulpit in a spacious low room on a level with the street. The cold stones were strewn with clean straw, on which several of his disciples knelt on one knee, writing on the other, to enable them to take notes from the Master's improvised discourse, in the shorthand abbreviations which are the despair of modern decipherers.

The hall was full, not of students only, but of the most distinguished men belonging to the clergy, the court, and the legal faculty. There were some learned foreigners, too—soldiers and rich citizens. The broad faces were there, with prominent brows and venerable beards, which fill us with a sort of pious respect for our ancestors when we see their portraits from the Middle Ages. Lean faces, too, with burning, sunken eyes, under bald heads yellow from the labours of futile scholasticism, contrasted with young and eager countenances, grave faces, warlike faces, and the ruddy cheeks of the financial class.

These lectures, dissertations, theses, sustained by the brightest geniuses of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, roused our forefathers to enthusiasm. They were to them their bull-fights, their Italian opera, their tragedy, their dancers; in short, all their drama. The performance of Mysteries was a later thing than these spiritual disputations, to which, perhaps, we owe the French stage. Inspired eloquence, combining the attractions of the human voice skilfully used, with daring inquisition into the secrets of God, sufficed to satisfy every form of curiosity, appealed to the soul, and constituted the fashionable entertainment of the time. Not

only did theology include the other sciences, it was science itself, as grammar was science to the Ancient Greeks; and those who distinguished themselves in these duels, in which the orators, like Jacob, wrestled with the Spirit of God, had a promising future before them. Embassies, arbitrations between sovereigns, chancellorships, and ecclesiastical dignities were the meed of men whose rhetoric had been schooled in theological controversy. The professor's chair was the tribune of the period.

This system lasted till the day when Rabelais gibbeted dialectics by his merciless satire, as Cervantes demolished chivalry by a narrative comedy.

To understand this amazing period and the spirit which dictated its voluminous, though now forgotten, masterpieces, to analyse it, even to its barbarisms, we need only examine the Constitutions of the University of Paris and the extraordinary scheme of instruction that then obtained. Theology was taught under two faculties—that of Theology properly so called, and that of Canon Law. The faculty of Theology, again, had three sections—Scholastic, Canonical, and Mystic. It would be wearisome to give an account of the attributes of each section of the science, since one only, namely, Mystic, is the subject of this *Étude*.

Mystical Theology included the whole of Divine Revelation and the elucidation of the Mysteries. And this branch of ancient theology has been secretly preserved with reverence even to our own day; Jacob Bœhm, Swedenborg, Martinez Pasqualis, Saint-Martin, Molinos, Madame Guyon, Madame Bourignon, and Madame Krudener, the extensive sect of the Ecstatics, and that of the Illuminati, have at different periods duly treasured the doctrines of this science, of which the aim is indeed truly startling and portentous. In Doctor Sigier's day, as in our own, man has striven to gain wings to fly into the sanctuary where God hides from our gaze.

This digression was necessary to give a clue to the scene at which the old man and the youth from the island under Notre-Dame had come to be audience; it will also protect this narrative from all blame on the score of falsehood and hyperbole, of which certain persons of hasty judgment might perhaps suspect me.

Doctor Sigier was a tall man in the prime of life. His face, rescued from oblivion by the archives of the University, had singular analogies with that of Mirabeau. It was stamped with the seal of fierce, swift, and terrible eloquence. But the Doctor bore on his brow the expression of religious faith that his modern double had not. His voice, too, was of persuasive sweetness, with a clear and pleasing ring in it.

At this moment the daylight, that was stintingly diffused through the small, heavily-leaded window-panes, tinted the assembly with capricious tones and powerful contrasts from the chequered light and shade. Here, in a dark corner, eyes shone brightly, their dark heads under the sunbeams gleamed light above faces in shadow, and various bald heads, with only a circlet of white hair, were distinguished among the crowd like battlements silvered by moonlight. Every face was turned towards the Doctor, mute but impatient. The drowsy voices of other lecturers in the adjoining schools were audible in the silent street like the murmuring of the sea; and the steps of the two strangers, as they now came in, attracted general attention. Doctor Sigier, ready to begin, saw the stately senior standing, looked round for a seat for him, and then finding none, as the place was full, came down from his place, went to the new-comer, and with great respect, led him to the platform of his professor's chair, and there gave him his stool to sit upon. The assembly hailed this mark of deference with a murmur of approval, recognising the old man as the orator of a fine thesis admirably argued not long since at the Sorbonne.

The stranger looked down from his raised position on the crowd below with that deep glance that held a whole poem of sorrow, and those who met his eye felt an indescribable thrill. The lad, following the old man, sat down on one of the steps, leaning against the pulpit in a graceful and melancholy attitude. The silence was now profound, and the doorway and even the street were blocked by scholars who had deserted the other classes.

Doctor Sigier was to-day to recapitulate, in the last of a series of discourses, the views he had set forth in the former lectures on the Resurrection, Heaven, and Hell. His strange doctrine responded to the sympathies of the time, and gratified the immoderate love of the marvellous, which haunts the mind of man in every age. This effort of man to clutch the infinite, which for ever slips through his ineffectual grasp, this last tourney of thought against thought was a task worthy of an assembly where the brightest luminaries of the age had met, and where the most stupendous human imagination ever known, perhaps, at that moment shone.

The Doctor began by summing up in a mild and even tone the principal points he had so far established :—

'No intellect was the exact counterpart of another. Had man any right to require an account of his Creator for the inequality of powers bestowed on each ? Without attempting to penetrate rashly into the designs of God, ought we not to recognise the fact that by reason of their general diversity intelligences could be classed in spheres ? From the sphere where the least degree of intelligence gleamed, to the most translucent souls who could see the road by which to ascend to God, was there not an ascending scale of spiritual gift ? And did not spirits of the same sphere understand each other like brothers in soul, in flesh, in mind, and in feeling ?'

From this the Doctor went on to unfold the most

wonderful theories of sympathy. He set forth in Biblical language the phenomena of love, of instinctive repulsion, of strong affinities which transcend the laws of space, of the sudden mingling of souls which seem to recognise each other. With regard to the different degrees of strength of which our affections are capable, he accounted for them by the place, more or less near the centre, occupied by beings in their respective circles.

He gave mathematical expression to God's grand idea in the co-ordination of the various human spheres. 'Through man,' he said, 'these spheres constituted a world intermediate between the intelligence of the brute and the intelligence of the angels.' As he stated it, the divine Word nourishes the spiritual Word, the spiritual Word nourishes the living Word, the living Word nourishes the animal Word, the animal Word nourishes the vegetable Word, and the vegetable Word is the expression of the life of the barren Word. These successive evolutions, as of a chrysalis, which God thus wrought in our souls, this infusorial life, so to speak, communicated from each zone to the next, more vivid, more spiritual, more perceptive in its ascent, represented, rather dimly no doubt, but marvellously enough to his inexperienced hearers, the impulse given to Nature by the Almighty. Supported by many texts from the Sacred Scriptures, which he used as a commentary on his own statements to express by concrete images the abstract arguments he felt to be wanting, he flourished the Spirit of God like a torch over the deep secrets of creation, with an eloquence peculiar to himself, and accents that urged conviction on his audience. As he unfolded his mysterious system and all its consequences, he gave a key to every symbol and justified the vocation, the special gifts, the genius, the talent of each human being.

Then, instinctively becoming physiological, he remarked on the resemblance to certain animals stamped on some human faces, accounting for them by primordial

analogies and the upward tendency of all creation. He showed his audience the workings of Nature, and assigned a mission and a future to minerals, plants, and animals. Bible in hand, after thus spiritualising Matter and materialising Spirit, after pointing to the Will of God in all things, and enjoining respect for His smallest works, he suggested the possibility of rising by faith from sphere to sphere.

This was the first portion of his discourse, and by adroit digressions he applied the doctrine of his system to feudalism. The poetry—religious and profane—and the abrupt eloquence of that period had a grand opening in this vast theory, wherein the Doctor had amalgamated all the philosophical systems of the ancients, and from which he brought them out again classified, transfigured, purified. The false dogmas of two adverse principles and of Pantheism were demolished at his word, which proclaimed the Divine Unity, while ascribing to God and His angels the knowledge, the ends to which the means shone resplendent to the eyes of man. Fortified by the demonstrations that proved the existence of the world of Matter, Doctor Sigier constructed the scheme of a spiritual world dividing us from God by an ascending scale of spheres, just as the plant is divided from man by an infinite number of grades. He peopled the heavens, the stars, the planets, the sun.

Quoting Saint Paul, he invested man with a new power; he might rise, from globe to globe, to the very Fount of eternal life. Jacob's mystical ladder was both the religious formula and the traditional proof of the fact. He soared through space, carrying with him the passionate souls of his hearers on the wings of his word, making them feel the infinite, and bathing them in the heavenly sea. Then the doctor accounted logically for hell by circles placed in inverse order to the shining spheres that lead to God, in which torments and darkness take the place of the Spirit and of light. Pain was

as intelligible as rapture. The terms of the comparison were present in the conditions of human life and its various atmospheres of suffering and of intellect. Thus the most extraordinary traditions of hell and purgatory were quite naturally conceivable.

He gave the fundamental *rationale* of virtue with admirable clearness. A pious man, toiling onward in poverty, proud of his good conscience, at peace with himself, and steadfastly true to himself in his heart in spite of the spectacle of exultant vice, was a fallen angel doing penance, who remembered his origin, foresaw his guerdon, accomplished his task, and obeyed his glorious mission. The sublime resignation of Christians was then seen in all its glory. He depicted martyrs at the burning stake, and almost stripped them of their merit by stripping them of their sufferings. He showed their inner angel as dwelling in the heavens, while the outer man was tortured by the executioner's sword. He described angels dwelling among men, and gave tokens by which to recognise them.

He next strove to drag from the very depths of man's understanding the real sense of the word fall, which occurs in every language. He appealed to the most widely-spread traditions in evidence of this one true origin, explaining, with much lucidity, the passion all men have for rising, mounting—an instinctive ambition, the perennial revelation of our destiny.

He displayed the whole universe at a glance, and described the nature of God Himself circulating in a full tide from the centre to the extremities, and from the extremities to the centre again. Nature was one and homogeneous. In the most seemingly trivial, as in the most stupendous work, everything obeyed that law; each created object reproduced in little an exact image of that nature—the sap in the plant, the blood in man, the orbits of the planets. He piled proof on proof, always completing his idea by a picture musical with poetry.

And he boldly anticipated every objection. He thundered forth an eloquent challenge to the monumental works of science and human excrescences of knowledge, such as those which societies use the elements of the earthly globe to produce. He asked whether our wars, our disasters, our depravity could hinder the great movement given by God to all the globes; and he laughed human impotence to scorn by pointing to their efforts everywhere in ruins. He cried upon the manes of Tyre, Carthage, and Babylon; he called upon Babel and Jerusalem to appear; and sought, without finding them, the transient furrows made by the ploughshare of civilisation. Humanity floated on the surface of the earth as a ship whose wake is lost in the calm level of ocean.

These were the fundamental notions set forth in Doctor Sigier's address, all wrapped in the mystical language and strange school Latin of the time. He had made a special study of the Scriptures, and they supplied him with the weapons with which he came before his contemporaries to hasten their progress. He hid his boldness under his immense learning, as with a cloak, and his philosophical bent under a saintly life. At this moment, after bringing his hearers face to face with God, after packing the universe into an idea, and almost unveiling the idea of the world, he gazed down on the silent, throbbing mass, and scrutinised the stranger with a look. Then, spurred on, no doubt, by the presence of this remarkable personage, he added these words, from which I have eliminated the corrupt Latinity of the Middle Ages:—

'Where, think you, may a man find these fruitful truths if not in the heart of God Himself?—What am I?—The humble interpreter of a single line left to us by the greatest of the Apostles—a single line out of thousands all equally full of light. Before us, Saint Paul said, "*In Deo vivimus movemur et sumus.*" In our day,

less believing and more learned, or better instructed and more sceptical, we should ask the Apostle, "To what end this perpetual motion? Whither leads this life divided into zones? Wherefore an intelligence that begins with the obscure perfection of marble and proceeds from sphere to sphere up to man, up to the angel, up to God? Where is the Fount, where is the ocean, if life, attaining to God across worlds and stars, through Matter and Spirit, has to come down again to some other goal?"

'You desire to see both aspects of the universe at once. You would adore the Sovereign on condition of being suffered to sit for an instant on His throne. Mad fools that we are! We will not admit that the most intelligent animals are able to understand our ideas and the object of our actions; we are merciless to the creatures of the inferior spheres, and exile them from our own; we deny them the faculty of divining human thoughts, and yet we ourselves would fain master the highest of all ideas—the Idea of the Idea!

'Well, go then, start! Fly by faith up from globe to globe, soar through space! Thought, love, and faith are its mystical keys. Traverse the circles, reach the throne! God is more merciful than you are; He opens His Temple to all His creatures. Only, do not forget the pattern of Moses; put your shoes from off your feet, cast off all filth, leave your body far behind; otherwise you shall be consumed; for God—God is Light!'

Just as Doctor Sigier spoke these grand words, his face radiant, his hand uplifted, a sunbeam pierced through an open window, like a magic jet from a fount of splendour, a long triangular shaft of gold that lay like a scarf over the whole assembly. They all clapped their hands, for the audience accepted this effect of the sinking sun as a miracle. There was a universal cry of—

'*Vivat! Vivat!*'

The very sky seemed to shed approval. Godefroid, struck with reverence, looked from the old man to Doctor Sigier; they were talking together in an undertone.

'All honour to the Master!' said the stranger.

'What is such transient honour?' replied Sigier.

'I would I could perpetuate my gratitude,' said the older man.

'A line written by you is enough!' said the Doctor. 'It would give me immortality, humanly speaking.'

'Can I give what I have not?' cried the elder.

Escorted by the crowd, which followed in their footsteps, like courtiers round a king, at a respectful distance, Godefroid, with the old man and the Doctor, made their way to the oozy shore, where as yet there were no houses, and where the ferryman was waiting for them. The Doctor and the stranger were talking together, not in Latin nor in any Gallic tongue, but in an unknown language, and very gravely. They pointed with their hands now to heaven and now to the earth. Sigier, to whom the paths by the river were familiar, guided the venerable stranger with particular care to the narrow planks which here and there bridged the mud; the following watched them inquisitively; and some of the students envied the privileged boy who might walk with these two great masters of speech. Finally, the Doctor took leave of the stranger, and the ferry boat pushed off.

At the moment when the boat was afloat on the wide river, communicating its motion to the soul, the sun pierced the clouds like a conflagration blazing up on the horizon, and poured forth a flood of light, colouring slate roof-tops and humbler thatch with a ruddy glow and tawny reflections, fringed Philippe Auguste's towers with fire, flooded the sky, dyed the waters, gilded the plants, and aroused the half-sleeping insects. The immense shaft of light set the clouds on fire. It was

like the last verse of the daily hymn. Every heart was thrilled ; nature in such a moment is sublime.

As he gazed at the spectacle, the stranger's eyes moistened with the tenderest of human tears : Godefroid too was weeping ; his trembling hand touched that of the elder man, who, looking round, confessed his emotion. But thinking his dignity as a man compromised, no doubt, to redeem it, he said in a deep voice—

'I weep for my native land. I am an exile ! Young man, in such an hour as this I left my home. There, at this hour, the fireflies are coming out of their fragile dwellings and clinging like diamond sparks to the leaves of the iris. At this hour the breeze, as sweet as the sweetest poetry, rises up from a valley bathed in light, bearing on its wings the richest fragrance. On the horizon I could see a golden city like the Heavenly Jerusalem—a city whose name I may not speak. There, too, a river winds. But that city and its buildings, that river of which the lovely vistas, and the pools of blue water, mingled, crossed, and embraced each other, which gladdened my sight and filled me with love—where are they ?

'At that hour the waters assumed fantastic hues under the sunset sky, and seemed to be painted pictures ; the stars dropped tender streaks of light, the moon spread its pleasing snares ; it gave another life to the trees, to the colour and form of things, and a new aspect to the sparkling water, the silent hills, the eloquent buildings. The city spoke, it glittered, it called to me to return !

'Columns of smoke rose up by the side of the ancient pillars, whose marble sheen gleamed white through the night ; the lines of the horizon were still visible through the mists of evening ; all was harmony and mystery. Nature would not say farewell ; she desired to keep me there. Ah ! It was all in all to me ; my mother and my child, my wife and my glory ! The very bells

bewailed my condemnation. Oh, land of marvels! It is as beautiful as heaven. From that hour the wide world has been my dungeon. Beloved land, why hast thou rejected me?

'But I shall triumph there yet!' he cried, speaking with an accent of such intense conviction and such a ringing tone, that the boatman started as at a trumpet call.

The stranger was standing in a prophetic attitude and gazing southwards into the blue, pointing to his native home across the skyey regions. The ascetic pallor of his face had given place to a glow of triumph, his eyes flashed, he was as grand as a lion shaking his mane.

'But you, poor child,' he went on, looking at Godefroid, whose cheeks were beaded with glittering tears, 'have you, like me, studied life from blood-stained pages? What can you have to weep for, at your age?'

'Alas!' said Godefroid, 'I regret a land more beautiful than any land on earth—a land I never saw and yet remember. Oh, if I could but cleave the air on beating wings, I would fly——'

'Whither?' asked the exile.

'Up there,' replied the boy.

On hearing this answer, the stranger seemed surprised; he looked darkly at the youth, who remained silent. They seemed to communicate by an unspeakable effusion of the spirit, hearing each other's yearnings in the teeming silence, and going forth side by side, like two doves sweeping the air on equal wing, till the boat, touching the strand of the island, roused them from their deep reverie.

Then, each lost in thought, they went together to the sergeant's house.

'And so the boy believes that he is an angel exiled from heaven!' thought the tall stranger. 'Which of us all has a right to undeceive him? Not I—I, who am so

often lifted by some magic spell so far above the earth ; I who am dedicate to God ; I who am a mystery to myself. Have I not already seen the fairest of the angels dwelling in this mire ? Is this child more or less crazed than I am ? Has he taken a bolder step in the way of faith ? He believes, and his belief no doubt will lead him into some path of light like that in which I walk. But though he is as beautiful as an angel, is he not too feeble to stand fast in such a struggle ? '

Abashed by the presence of his companion, whose voice of thunder expressed to him his own thoughts, as lightning expresses the will of Heaven, the boy was satisfied to gaze at the stars with a lover's eyes. Overwhelmed by a luxury of sentiment, which weighed on his heart, he stood there timid and weak—a midge in the sunbeams. Sigier's discourse had proved to them the mysteries of the spiritual world ; the tall, old man was to invest them with glory ; the lad felt them in himself, though he could in no way express them. The three represented in living embodiment Science, Poetry, and Feeling.

On going into the house, the Exile shut himself into his room, lighted the inspiring lamp, and gave himself over to the ruthless demon of Work, seeking words of the silence and ideas of the night. Godefroid sat down in his window sill, by turns gazing at the moon reflected in the water, and studying the mysteries of the sky. Lost in one of the trances that were frequent with him, he travelled from sphere to sphere, from vision to vision, listening for obscure rustlings and the voices of angels, and believing that he heard them ; seeing, or fancying that he saw, a divine radiance in which he lost himself ; striving to attain the far-away goal, the source of all light, the fount of all harmony.

Presently the vast clamour of Paris, brought down on the current, was hushed ; lights were extinguished one

by one in the houses; silence spread over all; and the huge city slept like a tired giant.

Midnight struck. The least noise, the fall of a leaf, or the flight of a jackdaw changing its perching-place among the pinnacles of Notre-Dame, would have been enough to bring the stranger's mind to earth again, to have made the youth drop from the celestial heights to which his soul had soared on the wings of rapture.

And then the old man heard with dismay a groan mingling with the sound of a heavy fall—the fall, as his experienced ear assured him, of a dead body. He hastened into Godefroid's room, and saw him lying in a heap with a long rope tight round his neck, the end meandering over the floor.

When he had untied it, the poor lad opened his eyes.

'Where am I?' he asked, with a hopeful gleam.

'In your own room,' said the elder man, looking with surprise at Godefroid's neck, and at the nail to which the cord had been tied, and which was still in the knot.

'In heaven?' said the boy, in a voice of music.

'No; on earth!'

Godefroid rose and walked along the path of light traced on the floor by the moon through the window, which stood open; he saw the rippling Seine, the willows and plants on the island. A misty atmosphere hung over the waters like a smokey floor.

On seeing the view, to him so heartbreaking, he folded his hands over his bosom, and stood in an attitude of despair; the Exile came up to him with astonishment on his face.

'You meant to kill yourself?' he asked.

'Yes,' replied Godefroid, while the stranger passed his hand about his neck again and again to feel the place where the rope had tightened on it.

But for some slight bruises, the young man had been but little hurt. His friend supposed that the nail had

given way at once under the weight of the body, and the terrible attempt had ended in a fall without injury.

'And why, dear lad, did you try to kill yourself?'

'Alas!' said Godefroid, no longer restraining the tears that rolled down his cheeks, 'I heard the Voice from on high; it called me by name! It had never named me before, but this time it bade me to Heaven! Oh, how sweet is that voice!—As I could not fly to Heaven,' he added artlessly, 'I took the only way we know of going to God.'

'My child! oh, sublime boy!' cried the old man, throwing his arms round Godefroid, and clasping him to his heart. 'You are a poet; you can boldly ride the whirlwind! Your poetry does not proceed from your heart; your living, burning thoughts, your creations, move and grow in your soul.—Go, never reveal your ideas to the vulgar! Be at once the altar, the priest, and the victim!

'You know Heaven, do you not? You have seen those myriads of angels, white-winged, and holding golden sistrums, all soaring with equal flight towards the Throne, and you have often seen their pinions moving at the breath of God as the trees of the forest bow with one consent before the storm. Ah, how glorious is unlimited space! Tell me.'

The stranger clasped Godefroid's hand convulsively, and they both gazed at the firmament, whence the stars seemed to shed gentle poetry which they could hear.

'Oh, to see God!' murmured Godefroid.

'Child!' said the old man suddenly, in a sterner voice, 'have you so soon forgotten the holy teaching of our good master, Doctor Sigier? In order to return, you to your heavenly home, and I to my native land on earth, must we not obey the voice of God? We must walk on resignedly in the stony paths where His almighty finger points the way. Do not you quail at the thought of the danger to which you exposed yourself? Arriving

there without being bidden, and saying, "Here I am!" before your time, would you not have been cast back into a world beneath that where your soul now hovers? Poor outcast cherub! Should you not rather bless God for having suffered you to live in a sphere where you may hear none but heavenly harmonies? Are you not as pure as a diamond, as lovely as a flower?

'Think what it is to know, like me, only the City of Sorrows!—Dwelling there I have worn out my heart. —To search the tombs for their horrible secrets; to wipe hands steeped in blood, counting them over night after night, seeing them rise up before me imploring forgiveness which I may not grant; to mark the writhing of the assassin and the last shriek of his victim; to listen to appalling noises and fearful silence, the silence of a father devouring his dead sons; to wonder at the laughter of the damned; to look for some human form among the livid heaps wrung and trampled by crime; to learn words such as living men may not hear without dying; to call perpetually on the dead, and always to accuse and condemn!—Is that living?'

'Cease!' cried Godefroid; 'I cannot see you or hear you any further! My reason wanders, my eyes are dim. You light a fire within me which consumes me.'

'And yet I must go on!' said the senior, waving his hand with a strange gesture that worked on the youth like a spell.

For a moment the old man fixed Godefroid with his large, weary, lightless eyes; then he pointed with one finger to the ground. A gulf seemed to open at his bidding. He remained standing in the doubtful light of the moon; it lent a glory to his brow which reflected an almost solar gleam. Though at first a somewhat disdainful expression lurked in the wrinkles of his face, his look presently assumed the fixity which seems to gaze on an object invisible to the ordinary organs of sight. His eyes, no doubt, were seeing then the remoter images which the grave has in store for us.

Never, perhaps, had this man presented so grand an aspect. A terrible struggle was going on in his soul, and reacted on his outer frame; strong man as he seemed to be, he bent as a reed bows under the breeze that comes before a storm. Godefroid stood motionless, speechless, spellbound; some inexplicable force nailed him to the floor; and, as happens when our attention takes us out of ourselves while watching a fire or a battle, he was wholly unconscious of his body.

'Shall I tell you the fate to which you were hastening, poor angel of love? Listen! It has been given to me to see immeasurable space, bottomless gulfs in which all human creations are swallowed up, the shoreless sea whither flows the vast stream of men and of angels. As I made my way through the realms of eternal torment, I was sheltered under the cloak of an immortal—the robe of glory due to genius, and which the ages hand on—I, a frail mortal! When I wandered through the fields of light where the happy souls play, I was borne up by the love of a woman, the wings of an angel; resting on her heart, I could taste the ineffable pleasures whose touch is more perilous to us mortals than are the torments of the worser world.

'As I achieved my pilgrimage through the dark regions below I had mounted from torture to torture, from crime to crime, from punishment to punishment, from awful silence to heartrending cries, till I reached the uppermost circle of Hell. Already, from afar, I could see the glory of Paradise shining at a vast distance; I was still in darkness, but on the borders of day. I flew, upheld by my Guide, borne along by a power akin to that which, during our dreams, wafts us to spheres invisible to the eye of the body. The halo that crowned our heads scared away the shades as we passed, like impalpable dust. Far above us the suns of all the worlds shone with scarce so much light as the twinkling fireflies of my native land. I was soaring towards the fields of air where, round about Paradise, the bodies of light are in

closer array, where the azure is easy to pass through, where worlds innumerable spring like flowers in a meadow.

'There, on the last level of the circles where those phantoms dwell that I had left behind me, like sorrows one would fain forget, I saw a vast shade. Standing in an attitude of aspiration, that soul looked eagerly into space; his feet were riveted by the will of God to the topmost point of the margin, and he remained for ever in the painful strain by which we project our purpose when we long to soar, as birds about to take wing. I saw the man; he neither looked at us nor heard us; every muscle quivered and throbbed; at each separate instant he seemed to feel, though he did not move, all the fatigue of traversing the infinite that divided him from Paradise where, as he gazed steadfastly, he believed he had glimpses of a beloved image. At this last gate of Hell, as at the first, I saw the stamp of despair even in hope. The hapless creature was so fearfully held by some unseen force, that his anguish entered into my bones and froze my blood. I shrank closer to my Guide, whose protection restored me to peace and silence.

'Suddenly the Shade gave a cry of joy—a cry as shrill as that of the mother bird that sees a hawk in the air, or suspects its presence. We looked where he was looking, and saw, as it were, a sapphire, floating high up in the abysses of light. The glowing star fell with the swiftness of a sunbeam when it flashes over the horizon in the morning and its first rays shoot across the world. The Splendour became clearer and grew larger; presently I beheld the cloud of glory in which the angels move—a shining vapour that emanates from their divine substance, and that glitters here and there like tongues of flame. A noble face, whose glory none may endure that have not won the mantle, the laurel, and the palm—the attribute of the Powers—rose above this cloud as white and pure as snow. It was Light within light. His wings as they waved shed dazzling ripples in the spheres through which he descended, as the glance of

God pierces through the universe. At last I saw the archangel in all his glory. The flower of eternal beauty that belongs to the angels of the Spirit shone in him. In one hand he held a green palm branch, in the other a sword of flame: the palm to bestow on the pardoned soul, the sword to drive back all the hosts of Hell with one sweep. As he approached, the perfumes of Heaven fell upon us as dew. In the region where the archangel paused, the air took the hues of opal, and moved in eddies of which he was the centre. He paused, looked at the Shade, and said—

'"To-morrow."

'Then he turned heavenwards once more, spread his wings, and clove through space as a vessel cuts through the waves, hardly showing her white sails to the exiles left on some deserted shore.

'The Shade uttered appalling cries, to which the damned responded from the lowest circle, the deepest in the immensity of suffering, to the more peaceful zone near the surface on which we were standing. This worst torment of all had appealed to all the rest. The turmoil was swelled by the roar of a sea of fire which formed a bass to the terrific harmony of endless millions of suffering souls.

'Then suddenly the Shade took flight through the doleful city, and down to its place at the very bottom of Hell; but as suddenly it came up again, turned, soared through the endless circles in every direction, as a vulture, confined for the first time in a cage, exhausts itself in vain efforts. The Shade was free to do this; he could wander through the zones of Hell icy, fetid, or scorching without enduring their pangs; he glided into that vastness as a sunbeam makes its way into the deepest dark.

'"God has not condemned him to any torment," said the Master, "but not one of the souls you have seen suffering their various punishments would exchange his anguish for the hope that is consuming this soul."

'And just then the Shade came back to us, brought thither by an irresistible force which condemned him to parch on the verge of Hell. My divine Guide, guessing my curiosity, touched the unhappy Shade with his palm-branch. He, who was perhaps trying to measure the age of sorrow that divided him from that ever-vanishing "To-morrow," started and gave a look full of all the tears he had already shed.

'"You would know my woe?" said he sadly. "Oh, I love to tell it. I am here, Teresa is above; that is all. On earth we were happy, we were always together. When I saw my loved Teresa Donati for the first time, she was ten years old. We loved each other even then, not knowing what love meant. Our lives were one; I turned pale if she were pale, I was happy in her joy; we gave ourselves up to the pleasure of thinking and feeling together; and we learned what love was, each through the other. We were wedded at Cremona; we never saw each other's lips but decked with the pearls of a smile; our eyes always shone; our hair, like our desires, flowed together; our heads were always bent over one book when we read, our feet walked in equal step. Life was one long kiss, our home was a nest.

'"One day, for the first time, Teresa turned pale and said, 'I am in pain!'—And I was not in pain!

'"She never rose again. I saw her sweet face change, her golden hair fade—and I did not die! She smiled to hide her sufferings, but I could read them in her blue eyes, of which I could interpret the slightest trembling. 'Honorino, I love you!' said she, at the very moment when her lips turned white, and she was clasping my hand still in hers when death chilled them. So I killed myself that she might not lie alone in her sepulchral bed, under her marble sheet. Teresa is above, and I am here. I could not bear to leave her, but God has divided us. Why, then, did He unite us on earth? He is jealous! Paradise was no doubt so much the fairer on the day when Teresa entered in.

'"Do you see her? She is sad in her bliss; she is parted from me! Paradise must be a desert to her."

'"Master," said I with tears, for I thought of my love, "when this one shall desire Paradise for God's sake alone, shall he not be delivered?" And the Father of Poets mildly bowed his head in sign of assent.

'We departed, cleaving the air, and making no more noise than the birds that pass overhead sometimes when we lie in the shade of a tree. It would have been vain to try to check the hapless Shade in his blasphemy. It is one of the griefs of the angels of darkness that they can never see the light even when they are surrounded by it. He would not have understood us.'

At this moment the swift approach of many horses rang through the stillness, the dog barked, the constable's deep growl replied; the horsemen dismounted, knocked at the door; the noise was so unexpected that it seemed like some sudden explosion.

The two exiles, the two poets, fell to earth through all the space that divides us from the skies. The painful shock of this fall rushed through their veins like strange blood, hissing as it seemed, and full of scorching sparks. Their pain was like an electric discharge. The loud, heavy step of a man-at-arms sounded on the stairs with the iron clank of his sword, his cuirass, and spurs; a soldier presently stood before the astonished stranger.

'We can return to Florence,' said the man, whose bass voice sounded soft as he spoke in Italian.

'What is that you say?' asked the old man.

'The *Bianchi* are triumphant.'

'Are you not mistaken?' asked the poet.

'No, dear Dante!' replied the soldier, whose warlike tones rang with the thrill of battle and the exultation of victory.

'To Florence! To Florence! Ah, my Florence!' cried Dante Alighieri, drawing himself up, and gazing into the distance. In fancy he saw Italy; he was gigantic.

'But I—when shall I be in Heaven?' said Godefroid, kneeling on one knee before the immortal poet, like an angel before the sanctuary.

'Come to Florence,' said Dante in compassionate tones. 'Come! when you see its lovely landscape from the heights of Fiesole you will fancy yourself in Paradise.'

The soldier smiled. For the first time, perhaps for the only time in his life, Dante's gloomy and solemn features wore a look of joy; his eyes and brow expressed the happiness he has depicted so lavishly in his vision of Paradise. He thought perhaps that he heard the voice of Beatrice.

A light step, and the rustle of a woman's gown, were audible in the silence. Dawn was now showing its first streaks of light. The fair Comtesse de Mahaut came in and flew to Godefroid.

'Come, my child, my son! I may at last acknowledge you. Your birth is recognised, your rights are under the protection of the King of France, and you will find Paradise in your mother's heart.'

'I hear, I know, the voice of Heaven!' cried the youth in rapture.

The exclamation roused Dante, who saw the young man folded in the Countess's arms. He took leave of them with a look, and left his young companion on his mother's bosom.

'Come away!' he cried in a voice of thunder. 'Death to the Guelphs!'

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